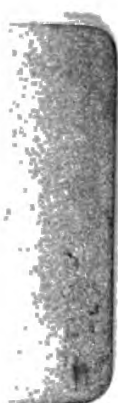


RUSSIA FIGHTS

JAMES E. BROWN



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***BY
JAMES E. BROWN***

***With a foreword
by Joseph E. Davies***

***✓
NEW YORK***

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A

YOUNG MAN

1. 1. II

**TO
PETIE**

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FOREWORD

BY

JOSEPH E. DAVIES

IT HAS BEEN SAID that World War II will be the most completely recorded conflict in history. Hundreds of newspapermen are now with the armed forces on every front. Through the medium of press, radio, and newsreel, they are giving a full picture of what is happening on the battlefields. (Many war correspondents have given their lives in that service.) But, more than that, they are telling us of the nature of the war, its causes and implications, and it is because of this universal education that I think there is more hope than heretofore of avoiding future international human slaughter. Nothing will contribute more to understanding among nations, which is, of course, essential for peace. With this in mind, I would urge every American to read Jim Brown's *Russia Fights*.

Russia Fights is not an ordinary war book. It is a fascinating and vivid picture of the Soviet Union by a veteran foreign correspondent.

Brown was in Moscow representing the International News Service during my stay there as ambassador. He impressed me then as one of the most American of correspondents, a keen observer, and a judicious reporter; and he has the advantage of knowing Russia at peace as well as at war. He has, I am sure, no axe to grind—only a sincere desire to present the Soviet Union as he saw it.

The Moscow press corps—Joseph Barnes, Demaree Bess, Harold Denny, Walter Duranty, Norman Deuel, Charlie Nutter, Dick

Massock, Henry Shapiro, and Spencer Williams—were men of strong and fine character. I always thought of them as unofficial members of the diplomatic colony; I respected them and trusted them, and they were of great help to me in assessing the situation there at that time. Jim Brown was a typical member of this group.

I believe that the chief appeal of this intensely readable book is that Brown thinks and writes as an average American. He has an entertaining style, and he answers the questions which people are asking. A passionate believer in democracy, he holds no brief for the Soviet political system, but he tells us frankly that it has brought great benefits to Russia. He believes, as I do, that we must work with the Soviet Union after the war, and our different methods of government need be no obstacle to that cooperation. If we cooperate with Russia on a basis of fairness to her, the Soviet Union can be an inestimable power and a great influence in the establishment of permanent peace and the elimination of war, for the common benefit of all of us. To think of the Soviet Union in any other way and to deal with her in any other manner is to expose the world and ourselves to many avoidable dangers and catastrophes. Concerning this policy, I wrote to the Department of State at the end of my service as Ambassador to the Soviet Union, the following:

“Such a policy does not involve approving in any manner the ideological concepts of this government. It does, however, recognize the right of self-determination. It is interpretative of the high-minded and Christianlike declarations of the foreign policy of the United States as expressed by the President of the United States and the Secretary of State in connection with foreign affairs. It is a ‘Good Neighbor Policy,’ and one consistent with the best traditions of our diplomatic history.”

Much will depend upon how the rest of the world approaches the problem of post-war construction, and the attitude of the other

nations towards the U.S.S.R. If there are evidences of hostility on the part of the outside world, the Soviets will certainly detect it and protect themselves. On the other hand, if they believe in, and trust the proposals of Great Britain, China, and ourselves, and the United Nations, they will, in my opinion, go as far as any of these in a high-minded and altruistic effort to cooperate in creating a stable and decent world. The first concern of Soviet foreign policy, I believe, is to insure the territorial security of the Soviet Union. Once that security is established, the Soviet policy is to develop the U.S.S.R. internally. That can best be done in a peaceful world. After this war there will be still greater need for peace to promote their plans for the internal developments of their country.

Russia Fights should do much to promote Soviet-American understanding. Jim Brown gives us a good picture of war-time Moscow, and, with an eye for relevant details, he also portrays the daily life and feeling of the people. Even his few criticisms are voiced with an honesty that lends added weight to his favorable comments.

While there are some of his conclusions with which I am not in accord, I nevertheless hope every American will read Mr. Brown's book. It is, in my opinion, one of the most outstanding books of the year on the Soviet situation.

CHAPTER I

CONVOY TO MURMANSK

IT STARTED at eight o'clock in the morning when we were three days north of Iceland. The bosun came down the ladder and woke me in my bunk and said two Focke-Wulf's had been circling the convoy for ten minutes. I could see he was nervous, and I jumped out of bed and started dressing. The bosun had been torpedoed three times, and had worked on blockade-running ships to China and Spain before the war. I felt his excitement, and, knowing his past record, I moved fast. He told me later in Murmansk that he had been nervous ever since we left England because three-fourths of our cargo was TNT and cordite; few of the crew knew this; it was understood we were carrying cocoa beans and airplanes. The bosun ran back the passage to the ladder, and I heard him slam the door on deck. While pulling on my boots I thought of a conversation I had had with one of the ship's officers the previous night. He said that at a recent Admiralty conference for the captains of a convoy one of the Royal Navy officers tried to demonstrate a merchant ship's chances against an enemy bomber. He placed a match on the floor and tried to drop an aspirin tablet on it from the height of a table.

"You see, gentlemen," he said to the captains, "one usually misses. It's a difficult target."

The merchant skippers were not convinced, and one asked about dive-bombers.

"Ah, that's another story," he replied. But, as the merchant officer said, it was not only another story, it was just about the whole story.

I went up on deck, and I could see the planes. They were circling the convoy just out of reach of our guns. There were British and American ships in our convoy, and we had an escort of destroyers, corvettes, and one cruiser. The crew were all wearing life-belts, and I went down the ladder and got mine from where it was hanging over my bunk. The life-belt was supposed to be able to keep any one afloat in the water for eighteen hours. But that was useless in these Arctic waters with the ship forced to plow through ice fields every thirty or forty miles. No man would need his life-belt very long. I went in the officers' mess-room and sat down to breakfast. My two fellow-passengers were already there: John Reed, who was on his way to Kuybeshev as second secretary of the British Embassy, and Harold King, a newspaperman working for Reuter. Neither had much to say, so we ate in silence, listening to the steward sing "Sweet Sue" in the kitchen. He had a bad voice.

The Focke-Wulfs circled us for two hours, and the atmosphere on board ship began to get tense. We knew they had signalled our position and were watching us until reinforcements arrived, either bombers or submarines, or both. It turned out to be both.

I went up on the bridge and found the captain and three officers there as well as the helmsman and a look-out. The captain, a remarkable old Scot named John Lawrie, who wore the ribbons of the DSO and DSM, was watching the planes through a telescope. He handed it to me, and I looked at them a few minutes. They were big, and my mouth felt a little dry, because I knew then they were the first warning of death to so many men in our long line of ships. The other officers were busy with the anti-aircraft guns, and Reed came up and offered to help. There was nothing we could do, however, so I left the bridge.

Back on deck, the ship's carpenter, who had repaired the door to my cabin, asked me worriedly if it still stuck. I assured him it

worked perfectly and said I hoped I would have a chance to use it. The carpenter had been in the battle of Narvik, and, during the retreat, managed to cross to Sweden. He was interned but later escaped with forty-five other British sailors. He considered this incident of no interest, although I had occasionally persuaded him to tell me a little about it. While we were talking I looked at my watch and saw it was twelve o'clock, just three hours since the Focke-Wulfs spotted us. Then it happened. Eight bombers came over the horizon in a steady drone, unwaveringly headed for the first ship in the convoy. They came down the line flying low and fast, dropping everything they had. Not dive-bombers this time.

I have been bombed on land, but it is not comparable to being bombed on a ship. On land, even a tree gives one a faint sense of protection, but there is nothing on a ship. All the destroyers and corvettes as well as the merchantmen put up a terrific barrage as the planes came in, and it probably saved us. At least, I think it forced the Germans to alter course sufficiently to spoil their aim. The British merchant ships were armed with four light anti-aircraft guns and carried a twelve-pounder in the stern, while the American merchantmen had approximately the same armament except they also had a heavy gun in the bow.

When the attack finished, none of the convoy had been sunk although a few were damaged. There was trouble on our ship because the helmsman left the wheel and ran off the bridge when the first bomber came over. This is a serious offense at any time, but, in such circumstances, it is doubly bad. The first mate, who took the wheel in his place, said he would have shot him if he had had a revolver. In fairness, it should be added the helmsman had been torpedoed twice since the war started; he was only nineteen, but his experiences had aged him so he looked thirty. His record was typical of the crew; almost every one had been

torpedoed or bombed before, a few had lost as many as three ships. The second radio operator, for example, had been in the water for forty minutes off Spain before he was picked up. The first radio operator had been a prisoner on the *Graf Spee* and was kept in a locked room with other British sailors during the running battle off South America.

He said Captain Langsdorf, the *Graf Spee* skipper who later committed suicide, treated the British fairly well, but the food was bad, and they had no cigarettes. The feeling of being trapped while they were in the locked room and the pocket battleship was repeatedly hit, was the most terrifying experience of his life, he said. But, in general, they didn't talk about the war; discussions were usually about the girls in various ports.

We expected to be bombed again, and, in about an hour, the Focke-Wulfs appeared and began circling the convoy once more. The feeling on the ship through the long hours of the afternoon became unbearably tense; we expected the bombers to appear, and each man dreaded the sudden jerk and explosion that would be the first warning of a submarine torpedo. The crew stood in groups aft, and most of the officers were on the bridge or on the deck forward. Nobody cared to be below decks. I suddenly thought of the engine-room crew and the stokers, and I went down the greasy steel ladder to see them. The stokers were shovelling methodically as usual, beads of sweat standing out on their bare backs. I talked with the young third engineer and asked him how the men were standing the strain. He seemed all worn out, and I noticed for the first time that he was only a boy, despite his three-weeks beard matted with oil stains.

"They're scared as hell," he said. "So'm I. The second engineer is sick, and I had to do his trick as well as my own."

He picked up a wrench and continued.

"These native stokers would quit in a minute and run up on

deck if I turned my back on them. Then the Jerries would really have us. They're used to the tropics, and they don't like this cold weather; they were discontented even before the planes showed up."

He looked at them gloomily.

"But if the stokers don't quit, the damn engine is likely to conk out anyway—it should have been repaired after the last trip. This old tub would have been scrapped if it hadn't been for the war."

Suddenly he grinned apologetically and started towards the ladder.

"I work like hell to keep my mind off things; if I began to think I'd go crazy—or I couldn't stay down here."

I climbed up the long ladder and steel stairway, and the third engineer came up as far as the first landing to get some tools. I didn't wish him good luck as he went down again because the words seemed empty. He had courage; he knew better than the stokers what little chance they had of getting out if the ship were badly hit. And he hated it, but he stuck.

The two planes circled us until dark, and dinner in the officers' mess was unusually silent. We sat around after dinner, and Reed and King both played solitaire while I read Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. I had started it at the beginning of the voyage and was near the end. But I couldn't get back to 1812, and I finally gave it up.

The captain advised us not to go below, so we bunked in the mess-room on the corner benches. I slept fitfully and was awakened at five o'clock by the cabin boy lighting a fire. It was cold and dark. I lit a cigarette and started thinking. Five days to Murmansk. Five days. I wondered why the Russians didn't send out any escort planes. Didn't they have any planes like the Focke-Wulfs of the Germans, or the Sunderland Flying Boats of the British? Nobody seemed to know. I wondered if my wife and

baby had arrived safely in America. They sailed from Scotland a week before I left England. Our convoy was delayed a week in Iceland, but I couldn't send a cable home to find out. Thinking at that hour in the morning is always bad, but my thoughts seemed to be getting worse and worse, so I tossed my cigarette in the stove and went out on deck. It was getting light, and the air was cold and sharp. I felt better. A sailor was working aft, singing,

“You'd be far better off in a home—
Far better off, far better off,—
—in a home.”

Thank God for the Cockneys, I thought. They are the salt of the earth, and I think my affection for the English goes mostly to those who were born within the sound of Bow Bells. I don't know whether it was the sailor's singing or the air, but I began to see things in a different perspective, and, after a while, I felt good, and I went up on the bridge. It was the third mate's watch.

The third mate was a big fellow, incredibly strong, with a P. G. Wodehouse name, Blenkinsop. Before the war he had been a travelling salesman, and his one ambition in life was to resume the profession again. Most of the men in English coast towns have spent a few years at sea, and he was one of the thousands who were called up in 1939. He nodded affably when he saw me, and he said there had been no enemy activity during the night. The destroyers had dropped several depth charges, but he thought it was only a precaution. We talked for about an hour, and Captain Lawrie came up a little before time for breakfast.

Captain Lawrie was a kindly man, understanding both men and the sea; he had been molded in the tradition of great sea captains. He remembered sailing ships. As commander of one of the mystery Q-boats, the *Mary B. Mitchell*, he had sunk five U-boats in the last war and had been three times decorated at Buckingham

Palace. One night, during the week we were waiting off Iceland, I sat up with him until about two o'clock, and he told me of his experiences in the *Mary B. Mitchell*. He told the story reluctantly, and, I think, with a note of regret. He did not like killing, and he did not feel any glory in his success. A pleasant postscript to my friendship with Captain Lawrie is that five months later I had the pleasure of cabling congratulations from Moscow to him in Scotland. The Soviet government had awarded him the highest decoration given to any British or American merchant captain, the Order of the Red Banner.

The captain and I went down to breakfast and found Reed and King already at the table. Neither had shaved, and I told Reed he shattered all my illusions about British diplomats. Captain Lawrie said it was true about the Englishman on a desert island who shaved and put on a dinner jacket every night before dining; he looked at Reed's unshaved face and said he couldn't be English. Reed said he would have shaved, but it was Thursday, and we were always given an egg for breakfast on Thursday. He claimed he couldn't wait. So we were all more cheerful at the meal, but, after eating, when I went out on deck for a smoke the two Focke-Wulfs were back circling the convoy again. The bosun and three sailors were putting the life-boats out over the side in readiness to be dropped in the water. The day had started, and it was going to be long.

The morning dragged interminably, and nerves were worse than the previous afternoon. The bosun finished loosening the life-boats and the two rafts, and he came over to where I was leaning against the rail. I was looking at an official paper indicating which life-boat each man on the ship was to take. We never had had life-boat drill, and I asked the bosun what officer was assigned to my boat. He smiled a little and said,

"Oh, the hell with that. It doesn't mean anything."

I looked at him, and he went on.

"If this ship is hit you jump off and swim as far clear as you can. You might get on a raft or a life-boat later." He paused, and added, "If any of them get away from the ship."

There wasn't going to be much time for life-boats, evidently. Just then, there were three loud explosions in succession, and I felt jumpy as hell, but they were only depth charges. Then I thought "only depth charges" wasn't so good either; the destroyers had sound detectors for submarines, and they weren't dropping depth charges just on the chance of hitting something. I went in the officers' mess at eleven o'clock for coffee. Reed was grimly playing solitaire, and King had decided to have coffee with the first engineer in his cabin. I had never met Reed before the trip, but he and I had a lot of mutual acquaintances in Bucharest, London, and Washington. Unusually intelligent, he had an ironic sense of humor that made him an amusing companion.

He and I sat in the mess-room until about 12:30 when I went to look for the chief steward in order to buy a bottle of gin. The chief steward, a little man from Yorkshire, was having a drink himself. He was standing in front of the bureau in his cabin, holding the glass in his hand, and looking at a picture of a woman and two children. He half turned when I entered and waved at the bottle.

"Have a drink," he said, and sat on the bed.

The officers used to get a lot of amusement from the chief steward. He had bought a new uniform with shiny buttons which he always wore when going ashore. He carried himself proudly, and people were properly impressed, not knowing, as the officers pointed out, that he was only a glorified waiter on a tramp ship.

I thought this vanity was funny, but now I just felt sorry for a tired little man who had plenty of troubles. He didn't want to talk, so I got the bottle of gin and went back to the mess-room.

The galley boy was setting the table, and the captain and the first mate and I had a drink. The destroyers were letting off depth charges more frequently now, and the thunderous reverberations as each one exploded under the water seemed to affect even the sardonic first mate. I put what was left of the gin in the cupboard, and we sat down to lunch. It was a bad meal, but nobody complained, not even Reed, whose stomach had been bothering him for days. We ate hurriedly, and the officers immediately went back up on the bridge. I lit a cigarette and went out on deck.

It happened just as I reached the rail and my eyes were getting accustomed to the bright sunlight. The ship next to us in the line, about three hundred yards away, seemed to break in half as there was a terrific explosion followed by two more in quick succession. Great clouds of smoke and steam rose above the water, and only half the stern was left on the surface. Then there was a loud rumbling as her cargo of tanks broke loose in the hold and plunged downward. Simultaneously what was left of the stern quivered and disappeared. It all happened in two minutes and fifteen seconds. There was only a little debris and oil on the surface to mark where a U-boat had got the first victim. The X—— was the biggest ship in our convoy, and her sinking was so quick that I stayed at the rail seconds after she had sunk unable to believe or fully comprehend what had happened.

Nothing in life has seemed to me so horrible. I dimly remember the next ship in the convoy, an American vessel, swinging sharply out of line, and I thought they were going to try to pick up survivors. All the other ships kept going, and I felt proud that an American ship would take such a risk. But that was a landsman's ignorance; our merchantmen had orders to keep going whatever happened, and the American had swung out only for a few minutes to present a narrow stern to possible following torpedoes. Corvettes and destroyers had the job of picking up sur-

vivors, if any. They, meanwhile, were dropping such a barrage of depth charges that torpedo explosions on other ships probably wouldn't be heard.

The submarine was still close; we knew that, and there were probably others. The incredible quickness with which the X—— had sunk stunned everybody; six thousand tons of war material and ninety-one men had disappeared in a little more than two minutes. I looked at the small ice floes floating in the water, and I thought of the men on the X——, and then I couldn't think any more. I had to do something. I left the rail and hurried forward. The men were gathered in little silent groups staring at the sea. A Scottish boy was sitting on a pile of rope whimpering softly to himself. The first mate came bounding down from the bridge and shouted instructions to the bosun about the life-boats. They both showed strain, but they moved efficiently. I met Reed and asked him where King was, but he didn't know.

"Isn't it hell!" he said, making a quick sign of the cross.

"You know, John," I said, "I envy you that. I wish I could pray, but I haven't done it in ten years, and it seems a bad time to start now."

I have often thought about it since; it seemed very real and clear-cut to me then. You can't suddenly recognize God because you're afraid to die, or can you? Many men have had to decide that question in the last few years. I remember one time Frank Muto, of International News Photos, and I were lying in a ditch in Lwow, Poland, under some heavy bombing, and Frank handed me a small Sacred Heart. It is one of my most treasured possessions, but I am not sure whether because of its religious significance, or as a symbol of Frank's friendship. Probably both.

Reed and I fastened our life-belts tighter and moved aft. The two Focke-Wulfs were still circling the convoy, and we looked at them for a while, and then walked back. The destroyers' depth

charges had become less frequent, and I lit a cigarette and prepared for a breathing spell. A corvette drew near us and dropped a depth charge with a terrific roar that shook the ship from stem to stern. Simultaneously, a cabin door flew open and the second radio operator hurled himself on deck screaming,

"That's us!"

I knew it wasn't, I knew it was a depth charge and not a torpedo, but that hysterical voice filled with terror shook me badly. I felt hot anger at the man for frightening me; God knows I felt bad enough already. The radio operator shook his head dazedly and sat on the doorsteps, lighting a cigarette with trembling fingers. I felt ashamed of myself for being angry with him, and I sat down beside him and said something. He just shook his head. Reed walked by, and he and I went in the mess-room and played checkers. The radio operator went back to his cabin. Reed found the remainder of the bottle of gin, and we poured out two stiff drinks. Then we arranged the board and played for half an hour in absolute silence until the third mate, Blenkinsop, walked in. He refused a drink and sat down.

"You boys must love checkers," he said.

"Might as well," I replied.

But Reed and I talked about that game of checkers later one day at lunch in Moscow. He said it did a lot for him, and I know it helped me. I mentally locked all the doors of my mind and concentrated on the game. By the time Blenkinsop interrupted us I was feeling better—that is, I had attained some balance. Things didn't look any better, but I was less confused. During the few minutes after the *X*— went down, I discovered a lot about myself. I knew that I dreaded that icy water which had swallowed up ninety-one men before my eyes. I didn't see the men close up, and imagination adds a good deal.

I once saw eighteen men sentenced to death at the Bukharin

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trial in Moscow. They were sentenced one after another, and I watched their expressions as they listened to the judge; their death was probably worse than what I had just seen, but I didn't believe it. I didn't think it was worse. I realized then that I had seen so much death in Poland and London since 1939 that I had never thought of the question subjectively at all. And I've since been glad I had to think of it, because when Blenkinsop came in the mess-room I knew I would never again get as confused as I had been. That much, and that alone, was clear.

Reed and Blenkinsop took the checker-board, and I walked out on deck. The chief engineer, a Welshman, started to tell me how he had seen the sinking from the port-hole of his room. His eagerness to describe what he had seen annoyed me; I didn't want to hear it. He reminded me of people at an accident who insist on repeating how it happened. I didn't want to be rude to him because he wasn't a bad old fellow; his only daughter, a brilliant young woman, had died the year before, and he had never quite gotten over it. When he got excited he lapsed into Welsh dialect which nobody could understand. I finally got rid of him and sat on one of the bulk-heads for the rest of the afternoon. Towards sunset, a British cruiser and two Soviet destroyers came up fast and joined us in the convoy. The Russians at last!

I had seen the British cruiser before, and I was most interested in the Soviet destroyers. They were sleek and long and fast. They looked a great deal like Italian destroyers, and I learned later the Soviets had, in fact, bought some destroyers from the Italians. The Russian sailors waved at us cheerfully, and the British waved back. It was all very cordial, and the gesture of waving at Russian sailors reminded me of an incident five years before which I made a mental note to tell the captain at dinner.

I was at that time a regular correspondent in Moscow, and Ambassador Joseph E. Davies invited the five American news-

papermen to take a cruise in the Baltic in the yacht *Sea Cloud*. The ambassador and Mrs. Davies had brought the yacht to Lenin-grad. The Soviet government gave Davies an honorary escort of two submarines, and they followed us for days on the surface, bouncing around in the rough sea. We usually had movies after dinner, and one night the ambassador asked the captain of the yacht to signal an invitation to one of the submarines for the crew to attend the picture. The Soviet commander accepted, and several of the crew came aboard. The picture, as I remember, was "Follies of 1936," and I said to the ambassador afterwards the combination of seeing foreign movies for the first time (and that one, of all movies) as well as visiting one of the world's most luxurious yachts must have had a curious effect on the ideas of the bolshevik sailors. Davies laughed.

The Soviet destroyers dropped a few depth charges and circled in and out of the convoy, but I wondered, and everybody on the ship was asking, why there were no Russian airplanes. It would have made a great deal of difference. Flying boats, of course, are not fighters, and we were too far from land for shore-based fighter protection. But, as Blenkinsop said, Sunderlands might have done something about those Focke-Wulfs. At dinner, we discussed the arrival of the new escorts, and it was generally thought by the officers that the ships were good but the sailing ability of the Russians was an unknown quantity.

We didn't talk much that night. Shortly after midnight, a submarine torpedo hit an ammunition ship, loaded like us, with TNT and cordite. The flash lit up the sea like daylight. The next two days and nights were hell, but I don't think anything was as terrible for me as seeing that first ship, the *X*——, go down. The thought in all our minds the evening of the fourth day was how near we were to Murmansk. I stayed up on the bridge until I was shivering with cold, and then I came down in the mess-room

where the cabin boy had poked up the fire. It had been a long trip, five weeks, and I noticed how worn everybody looked. Tomorrow we would be opposite Ribachi peninsula if nothing happened. Then, maybe, Murmansk and a bath. I hadn't had a bath since I left England. The ship lurched as it bumped headlong into an ice floe; that had been happening ever since we left Iceland, and the sides of the ship were scarred where the paint had been scraped off.

What we needed for this trip, I thought, was an ice-breaker. I once nearly had a trip on an ice-breaker, the *Joseph Stalin*, in 1938 when it rescued Papanin and the three other Soviet scientists who spent a year on an ice floe near the North Pole. Otto Schmidt, the head of the Soviet polar organization, tried to get me permission, but the authorities turned it down. That would have been a good story. I remember how excited I was and how disappointed. It all seemed long ago; everything that happened before the war seemed a long time ago. If we made this trip, I would get in on a big story, the biggest I had ever covered.

Reed got out a bottle of whiskey, and we had a night-cap. He decided to sleep in Blenkinsop's cabin, and I bunked in the radio operator's room. I didn't expect to be able to sleep, but I dozed off for a couple of hours when I was wakened with a start by the crash of a depth charge. I was sweating, and I felt feverish, but I didn't want to go out on deck for the risk of catching cold. So I stayed awake until breakfast and read a little. We were bombed again at eleven o'clock. It was bad while it lasted, and one of our ships was hit and a number of men killed. It didn't damage the engine, and the ship managed to keep in convoy. Our ship with its load of TNT would have blown up. We sighted land that afternoon and, at dusk, turned in the estuary for Murmansk.

I went to bed early that night, and I was so tired that I slept soundly for ten hours. When I awoke the sun was shining, and

we were going up the river. Land was close on either side, and I knew I could swim ashore if I had to. Every one felt happy. Bearded, haggard faces were lit with smiles; worn nerves relaxed; there were high spirits all over the ship. We were alive. Reed and I went down to our cabins in the hold for the first time in days, and we washed and shaved and put on fresh clothes. It was a great feeling.

CHAPTER II

ARCHANGEL

WE ROUNDED a bend in the river and sighted a small boat loaded with Russian pilots sent to take the convoy into Murmansk. One of them came aboard, and the captain met him and shook hands; then they went up on the bridge. A sallow-faced, expressionless individual, he stood near the helmsman and signalled with his hands "na prava," meaning right, and "na leva," left. The officers made one or two attempts to engage him in conversation, but, besides the language difficulty, he obviously was unwilling to talk. I went down in my cabin to finish packing. I had a typewriter and a year's supply of soap and a year's supply of writing paper as well as clothes for summer and winter. A newspaperman in London who was assigned to Russia once asked me what he should bring in with him. I made out a list and was surprised myself at its length, and still I had not covered everything. One is bound to run out of tooth-paste or razor blades, and, although these articles are not unobtainable in the Soviet Union, they are scarce and the quality is poor.

The cabin was dusty, and my bed unmade just as I had left it six days ago when the bosun had warned me about the Focke-Wulfs. I heard Reed complaining in the next cabin and discovered the boy had mixed up our laundries. He washed them with deck soap in pails of sea water, and the effect on our shirts was striking; colors faded, leaving a dull white which gave the impression that the wearer had on a dirty white shirt. I packed my electric razor carefully; it would make a lot of difference on cold mornings in Moscow when there was no hot water.

Lunch was a pleasant affair, the best meal in days. We arrived at Murmansk shortly afterwards and anchored in the middle of the river until arrangements could be made to dock. The town is situated on a hillside on the right bank of the river, and I could see immediately it had suffered several air raids. Besides the damage to buildings, the water-front for a couple of miles was occasionally marked with the charred hulks of ships which had been hit while tied up. I thought what bad luck to make that tough trip from England or America and then be smashed up in Murmansk. It looked as if we would have to stay in midstream until the next day, but Captain Lawrie wanted to dock before nightfall. His mind could not be easy until we had unloaded that cargo of TNT. The Germans knew of our arrival and would be likely to stage an air raid any minute. All our ships were fully loaded lying in the middle of the river. Two hours passed, and I could see the captain was getting annoyed. Blenkinsop leaned on the rail and spat in the water.

"Looks like the only way we'll reach land is to be blown there when a bomb hits this ship. God Almighty, I wish they'd hurry."

Just then a tug came alongside and signalled for us to pull up anchor. We docked in about fifteen minutes, and a crew of stevedores was waiting to unload the ship. Captain Lawrie relaxed and invited me to his cabin to have a drink. We were talking when there was a knock at the door, and the foreman of the stevedores, a bearded, husky old man, stepped in.

He bowed stiffly, there was simple dignity in the formality of his act, and asked the captain for the cargo list. He spoke English correctly but slowly and with obvious difficulty. The captain invited him to have a drink, and he smiled, stroking his beard as he took off his gloves. Lawrie looked at him expectantly as he poured, waiting for him to indicate when there was enough. The old stevedore watched without expression, and the captain filled up

the glass to the top and handed it to him. Then we all drank to the damnation of the Germans. The stevedore drained his glass of straight whiskey without pause; he didn't cough, and, beyond a slight wateriness of the eyes, he showed no signs of feeling the liquor. Captain Lawrie roared with laughter.

"Well, you got it down at one gulp," he said.

The old man beamed and replied,

"I am a Finn. I know the English. I once sailed on English ships."

He explained that there were a great many Finns in Murmansk and Archangel, not Finnish nationals, but Finns from the Karelian Republic. The Soviets, unlike the Czars, have not tried to Russify the different nationalities of the Union, and an Armenian is as conscious of his own language and nationality as a Mongolian. They do not consider themselves Russians.

The old man left, and the unloading started. They worked the cranes all night in the glare of searchlights, and the water-front was lit up almost to the middle of the river. I asked about the risk of German planes.

"The Jerries know where we are, anyway," said the first mate. "We have to take the risk of this light. We always work in twenty-four-hour shifts."

I slept soundly that night undisturbed by the noise and shouting of the stevedores. There was no air raid. Captain Lawrie, at breakfast, introduced me to Angus McCloud, the British shipping commissioner at Murmansk. He had been in Russia since the German invasion and had spent the winter at Archangel. He was showing signs of the strain which I noticed in all foreigners in Murmansk, but he was in a good mood and began to tell stories. One, in particular, I remember as being made for Ring Lardner: A British ship with Indian seamen was torpedoed near Murmansk, and several of the crew drowned. A Russian destroyer picked up

some of the bodies, and they were brought into Murmansk. There, they were stripped of identification marks and clothing and placed with hundreds of other naked bodies in a large wood-shed to await the spring thaw for burial.

Other Indian seamen heard of this and refused to sail again until they had buried their comrades properly. So McCloud, in his official capacity, had to spend a morning in the wood-shed picking out the bodies of the Indians, which he was able to do by their color.

He then consulted the Soviet authorities about burial, and the Russians were extremely cooperative, offering to supply the precious dynamite to blast a hole in the frozen ground. McCloud picked out a site on a hill-top, and everything was prepared for the final ceremony. The Indians arrived to attend the burial, telling McCloud their comrades should be buried with their heads to the west, as was necessary according to their religion.

It was a cloudy day, and the harassed commissioner made a guess which direction was west. The Indians were lowered into the ground in this fashion. About twenty minutes later, unfortunately for McCloud, the sun came out and revealed the Indians had been buried in the wrong direction. Their comrades, who were in the midst of prayers, were horrified and insisted that the bodies be dug up again and buried correctly. It was a trying day, he said.

McCloud grinned a little as he told this story, but I could see he regretted the mistake. As British shipping commissioner, he had a thousand jobs, and he did most of them ably, but the problems of human relationships in a port like Murmansk were far more complicated than ever appeared in official reports.

Reed, King and I decided to take our bags and go ashore. We wanted to check in at the hotel and make arrangements for going to Moscow. We felt bad saying good-bye to Captain Lawrie and

the officers, almost as if we were deserting them. We had been five weeks together, and we knew each other as well as men sometimes get to know each other in a lifetime association.

I think the French have a saying, "*partir c'est du mourir un peu.*" I don't know anything else that can describe the empty feeling I experienced as I walked up the hillside from the ship. They were great guys, the officers and crew, and I wished them luck as fervently as I ever wished anything in my life.

Murmansk had the appearance of a frontier town: one-story wooden houses, few paved streets, and about a dozen modern brick buildings which stood out prominently on the hillside. The hotel was one of these latter buildings, five stories high, and I was surprised German bombs had not yet hit it. A truck from the British military mission brought our bags from the ship. I had a good view from my hotel window of the river winding snake-like through the valley, and I could see the ships tied up at the wharves. The town and the docks made a perfect target, their darkness accented by the background of snow.

I went down to the lobby and was told the hotel restaurant, which had just been completed, would not be open for a few days. I heard an American voice and saw a man wearing a fur hat with the insignia of the U. S. Navy. I introduced myself and met for the first time Lieut. Comdr. Samuel Frankel. He was about medium height, dark and wiry, and exceedingly affable and friendly. He knew about the food situation at the hotel and invited me to eat at his apartment where he lived with his assistant, Chief Petty Officer McGuiness. I accepted, and, during the week I spent in Murmansk, I saw a great deal of Frankel and McGuiness.

They were the only American representatives in the town, and they looked after our ships and acted as liaison between the ship captains and the Russian authorities. By wise foresight, the Amer-

ican Navy had sent Frankel to Riga to learn Russian long before the war broke out, and, now that he was needed, he was doing a great job. The loneliness of spending a winter in this northern port while the harbor was locked with ice can be imagined, but Frankel and McGuinness never complained. It could, and did, break some men who found their only outlet for the terrible boredom in drink.

Reed, looking pale and tired, told me there wouldn't be a train to Archangel for several days. He said he and King had arranged to eat with the British military mission. There was an air raid that night, and the town and docks were plastered. The hotel had no air raid shelter, and Reed and I stood outside next to the wall. Many stayed inside, but we thought the building was too good a target, and we didn't want to be trapped. Both of us had seen too many ARP squads in London digging for victims the morning after a raid.

There was a sea captain from Boston at the hotel whose nerves were all shot to pieces. This was his first voyage into the war zone, and his ship had been torpedoed off Norway. He and some of the crew had drifted for days in an open boat before being picked up. His experiences had shattered his morale, and, never having been in air raids before, he thought each one was worse than its predecessor.

His obvious nerve strain reminded me of my own feelings in my first air raid, which was in Warsaw, September, 1939, the day war broke out. I had been sent from London, assigned to the Polish army, and chummed up with Frank Muto and an Englishman, Cedric Salter of the *Daily Mail*. Salter had been sent to Warsaw from Barcelona, fresh from covering the Spanish war. He had been in many air raids before; Frank and I had not. When the Germans came over, and the guns began to open up, Frank and I were in my room on the third floor of the Hotel Bristol. We

grabbed our gas masks and hurried down to the lobby. Women were weeping in the corridors, and there was the wildest confusion.

Suddenly, Frank and I thought of Salter. Where was he? Could he be asleep in his room? No one knew. So, feeling very much like a couple of heroes, we raced up to the fourth floor to wake him up. The guns were booming as we passed the second floor landing, and I thought of "better love hath no man, etc." I wondered afterwards why we didn't just telephone his room, but anything as simple as that didn't occur to us. We pounded at his door and burst into his room to find Salter sitting calmly at the window with a pair of field glasses and a bottle of cognac. He glanced at us with mild curiosity and remarked,

"Light raid, isn't it? Probably reconnaissance."

Salter wasn't deliberately acting nonchalant; it was a light raid, and its purpose was reconnaissance. But Muto and I said nothing; we silently helped ourselves to his cognac. And it wasn't until days later that we told him we thought we were saving his life.

So, as I noticed the shattered nerves of the sea captain in Murmansk, I wanted to say something, to cheer him up a little. But I knew it was no use; he was a man much older than I was, and he would have resented anything I might do. And, essentially, he was right about the danger; familiarity doesn't lessen danger. Still, there was very little good to be said about staying in that ramshackle hotel on the hill during a raid. I advised him once to come outside with me, but he looked at me incredulously when I told him it was safer, and wouldn't come.

One morning a few days later Frankel asked me if I would like to visit the Murmansk hospital with him. He explained there were several American and British sailors recovering after being torpedoed or bombed. It was a warm spring day, and the road was wet with melting snow as we walked to the hospital. It was

late in April, streams of muddy water ran down the hillside, filling up bomb craters, and exposing the nakedness of the town; it looked better under the snow. Frankel turned in at the hospital, and the door-keeper saluted him. We went in the superintendent's office, discarding our overcoats and putting on white coats, and the head nurse began to talk about the patients. While she and Frankel were talking, a doctor showed me a framed collection of pieces of shrapnel the hospital staff had taken out of wounded soldiers. I whistled over one piece, it was so big. The doctor smiled and nodded.

"Yes, a remarkable operation. Unfortunately, the patient died."

I looked at him again, but he wasn't being funny. All the other patients had lived, and they thought for a long time this one would, too. But he had other wounds; he was almost a pulp; it was a miracle that he lived at all. So they kept this shrapnel with the others because the operation was technically a success.

Frankel and I went up to the second floor to see the American merchant sailors. There were about twenty of them in the first ward, and they were pretty cheerful. They all looked pale and drawn, but they made jokes with one another and asked Frankel when they were going home. He said he had made arrangements to put them on a British cruiser in a few days, and it would take them as far as Scotland where they could transfer to an American ship. This was good news, and they were all smiling when we left. The second ward was the same; they seemed to be recovering comfortably, and the boys were playing cards and reading. Then we went up to the third floor, and Frankel told me to prepare for a shock. We entered a large ward, and I could see immediately these were bad cases.

There was no laughing, or playing cards; each man lay in his bed, staring at the wall, or asleep. Several had hooded violet-ray

lamps at the foot of the bed shining on their feet. The lamp-hoods covered everything, and I couldn't see their feet, but I knew they were black or discolored.

"Frost-bite," Frankel whispered. "Bad cases. Several of these are amputations."

He made no attempt to introduce me, as he had done in the other wards, and we passed quickly from bed to bed. One sailor, white as a ghost, looked up hopefully from his cot and said something to Frankel who turned to me and asked if I spoke Portuguese. I shook my head and he said,

"Too bad. This fellow doesn't speak much English. He's Portuguese and has just had his hands and feet amputated."

I was horrified and noticed for the first time he had kept his arms under the blanket. The Portuguese turned his head slightly and looked at me. His black eyes, filled with misery and sick despair, pleaded mutely. I said something to him, and he gasped haltingly,

"When am I going home? To New York?"

Frankel told him pretty soon, that he was making arrangements. But the man would not be able to travel for a long time; he was too sick.

We passed on, and I talked with other boys who had suffered amputations. They were all pitiful; most were dazed and apathetic, they looked at us incuriously. Some nodded a brief greeting to Frankel. One, who couldn't have reached twenty, smiled sadly in response to a joke, and assured me in a soft southern accent the nurses were treating him very well. Frankel told me he was from Alabama, and the doctors had decided they would have to amputate his feet the next day. I wondered if the boy knew it yet. Probably not.

We stopped at the last bed, and a man sat up and began to tell his troubles in pure Brooklynese. A hooded lamp was burning at

the end of his bed, and he pulled aside the covering and pointed at his feet.

"See those toes! Black as the ace of spades! They got to come off, see! And I want them to cut them off soon and stop wasting time. You tell them; they won't listen to me. I don't want to stay here six months."

He was excited, and Frankel promised to see the doctors. He told me later the Russians were extremely reluctant to amputate unless there was absolutely no other choice. They had, in fact, developed effective methods of dealing with frost-bite, but these methods were unavailing where gangrene had set in. There seemed to be no way of dealing with gangrene.

We stopped at the second floor and visited the convalescent wards again. I talked with a young sailor from New Jersey who said he had an important question for his labor union when he got home. He was opposed to Negroes working on ships coming to Russia, and he wanted his union to do something about it. I asked him if there was racial prejudice in the merchant navy.

"No," he said, "there isn't. Not much, anyway. But that isn't my point at all.

"The Negroes can't stand the cold. They just fold up and die. They will probably think I'm discriminating against them when I bring up the question, but it's for their own good. Let me tell you—"

And he told the story of his own experience. Nine days in an open boat in sub-zero weather. There were three Negroes, and they suffered the worst. They suffered incredibly; nothing could warm them. And about the fifth day, one of them died. The other two seemed to die with him, they lost all will to live and huddled in the stern of the boat. Another died on the seventh day. The third Negro silently watched the sailors say a prayer and drop the body overboard. Then he stood up, opened his coat, and drew a

long butcher knife and plunged it into his stomach. Blood spattered all over the boat as he staggered to the side and fell into the water. The next two days were a nightmare for the crew; most were raving when they were picked up.

I left the hospital, sobered by what I had seen. Frankel and I didn't talk much on the way back to the apartment. He was busy thinking about plans to get the boys on the British cruiser which had come in with our convoy. Later most of the sailors who were able to travel left on this cruiser. It was the *Edinburgh*. A few weeks afterwards, in Moscow, I heard the BBC announce the *Edinburgh* was sunk four days out of Murmansk.

After waiting a week, we left for Archangel with a British army doctor and a Scottish private. I liked the private, but the doctor was a bad case. He was about five feet tall, with a pseudo-Oxford accent which lapsed into pure Cockney when he was excited. Reed christened him "the twirplet." He was too small, Reed said, to be a twirp. There are two kinds of annoying foreigners in Russia, the violently anti-Soviet and the violently pro-Soviet. The doctor was of the latter variety. He carried a small Russian dictionary under his arm, and he was continually making observations on any subject and looking at us belligerently for contradiction. He cornered me and confided his opinions for about two hours until I went to sleep. Then he went out in the corridor. I looked out some time later and was amazed to see him talking to four or five startled Russians with the aid of his dictionary. We had three compartments on the train, one of which we used to prepare our food, there being nothing provided to eat. Preparing the food consisted only of opening a few cans, but the doctor disappeared into his compartment always just before meal-time and left the Scottish private to help us. This used to make Reed furious, and, in his best Cambridge manner, he announced that the private might be the doctor's batman, but, by God, he wasn't.

The train was "hard"—that is, it had no springs or cushions—but it made comparatively good time—about thirty miles an hour. We spread our sleeping bags on the benches at night. The worst stretch was from Kandalaksha to Nadvoitsk.

The track ran close to the White Sea, but we were still so near to the Finnish front that there was constant danger of being machine-gunned or bombed by enemy planes. That had happened several times during the winter. When bombing started, the train would stop, and passengers ran to the protection of the forests on either side of the track. They would sometimes be up to their necks in deep snow, and occasionally the train would go off and leave a few of them. I knew the Russians had few inhibitions or false modesty, and I commented on this the first morning when the train stopped and all the cars emptied of men and women who immediately squatted down and relieved themselves with many a grunt and a groan. The doctor was ecstatic about their naturalness and looked annoyed when I said it was another example of Soviet mass production.

We stopped for several hours at Nadvoitsk where the railroad to Archangel switches from the main line to Leningrad. The Scottish private said three months before he had been on a train from Murmansk with nineteen other British soldiers, and the train crew had forgotten to switch their car off when they started in the direction of the Leningrad front. The mistake was discovered several hours later when they were deep in the war zone, and there was much cursing. Finally, their car was unhooked, and a locomotive started back to Nadvoitsk with it. They had been going for about an hour when a Russian patrol signalled the locomotive to stop and warned that Finnish ski troops had made a raid and were fighting at the next station which they had set on fire.

The engineer decided to make a run for it, and, warning the British to lie flat in their car, he started the locomotive down the

track at full speed. The Finnish troops, in their white uniforms, saw the locomotive coming and riddled it with machine-gun bullets as it thundered past the burning station. The passenger car was splintered with holes, but no one was hurt.

We arrived at Archangel the afternoon of the third day. A few hours before we got in, a woman with a baby, to whom I had given a few cans of condensed milk, came into my compartment and silently gave me three boxes of matches. I had plenty of matches, and I was puzzled at the gift, but I learned later it was an extravagant repayment for the milk. Matches are exceedingly scarce in war-time Russia. I was sorry then I had accepted them. She told me she worked in Murmansk and was going home because she had just received word that her husband had been killed on the central front.

There were several British officers at the station in Archangel, and they helped us put our bags in a military truck. They said the ice on the river had been melting rapidly for several days, and it was unsafe to walk across to the town. Some people were still going across, but a few had already fallen through the ice that day. I had enough of water to last me for several months during our trip from England, and I immediately said I would stay on the station side until we could get a train to Moscow. Reed and King loudly agreed with me. The little doctor, however, said the only hotel was on the other side, and he was going across.

He had five heavy suitcases with him, and the British officers said it would be unsafe to go across the ice with more than one. He immediately pointed at the largest and heaviest one and started across the ice with his batman, the Scottish private, carrying the suitcase. We never found out whether they got across, but we thought the doctor might make it; although the big private with the heavy bag had a good chance of falling through. The private

evidently thought of this too, judging from his manner when he left.

We went into the railroad station to find out when the next train for Moscow was leaving and were told there would be one in about three days. Possibly. The station agent wasn't sure. This was bad news, and one of the British officers invited us to stay at their quarters at Bakaritzza, three miles away. We accepted gladly and went into the station restaurant to have a bite before leaving. The waiter brought us bowls of cabbage soup and thick black bread; I was hungry, and it tasted good.

I saw Reed was not eating, and I noticed how pale he looked. Suddenly, as he was raising a spoonful of soup to his mouth, he fainted and fell off his chair. We lifted him up, and he came to in a few seconds, his face very white. We walked outside for air. It was the culmination of fatigue, worry, and nervousness. He had had a tough two years. After the Germans entered the Balkans, he escaped by coming into Russia from Rumania and took the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow to the Pacific.

The Trans-Siberian is one of the most arduous railway journeys in the world, even in peace-time. Then he went to Japan and later worked a brief six months in Washington before taking this trip. It was too much, too much travelling on tramp steamers, too many bad meals, and too much war strain. He went to bed as soon as we arrived in Bakaritzza and stayed there for most of three days. The officers lived in a wooden four-story frame house which, like other houses for miles around, was surrounded by water a foot deep. Carefully laid plank bridges led up to the house which sheltered six officers who had lived together all winter. The rest of the military mission lived across the river at Archangel. They were exceedingly hospitable and eager for news of the outside world.

The commandant showed me a contraption which his batman

had constructed and which was the pride and joy of the officers. It was a three-seater outhouse built off the fourth floor. When a lever was pulled, it emptied into the river below. There were ten little cans filled with disinfectant on the floor, and the occupant was explicitly instructed to use only one at a time to flush the toilet when he left. It was ingenious; not exactly a marble-tiled bathroom but better than going outside when the temperature was forty below zero.

The time for departure of the train for Moscow was changed twice, but it was finally settled when it would leave. The commandant was most generous as we said good-bye, giving us canned food, cigarettes, and a bottle of whiskey apiece. Reed was feeling better, and I was glad to be on the last stages of the trip.

King suggested we might have to go on to Kuybyshev because the government and the newspapermen had spent the winter there, and they might still be there. I said we ought to spend a week in Moscow anyway, even if we were not allowed to cable anything, and have a look around. I was curious to see the city again after four years, and I wanted to see if the war had made many changes. Also, Reed needed a rest, so it was decided we would stay in Moscow for a few days, whatever happened.

We were three days travelling, and on the third day I began to recognize familiar landmarks and noticed that I felt a sense of pleasure. But it was not a nostalgia for the past, it was an anticipation of seeing something new. Two years of living in Moscow had not given me any kinship with the city. I am told that Russians feel that way also; that Leningrad and Odessa, for example, are warm, personal cities, but Moscow is cold. Moscow is the most youthful city I have ever been in; it is growing fast and changes from year to year. But it looks to the future and has little use for the past. Its two outstanding relics of yesterday, the Kremlin and St. Basil's cathedral, fit in with this concept. The Kremlin is now

the seat of government, and the Supreme Soviet assembles there. It has kept step with Moscow. St. Basil's cathedral, on the other hand, is a Byzantine horror whose designer, an Italian, had his eyes put out by Ivan the Terrible. Ivan admired his work and wanted to be sure he would never build another one. The most remarkable feature about Moscow is something new, the subway; it is easily the most beautiful in the world, every station a masterpiece, and its trains run like clockwork.

The platform was crowded as we drew to a stop, and Reed raised the window to hand out the baggage. A porter gave us a hand, and King said,

"Here at last. Now we'll know there's a war on."

I looked at a line of ambulances taking the wounded from a hospital train, and said,

"Yes, I guess we will."

CHAPTER III

MOSCOW

I COULD SEE immediately there was one Russian custom the war had not changed: greeting friends with flowers. Several men and women were standing on the platform, waiting expectantly, with armfuls of blossoms. The bouquets seemed smaller than in peacetime, but that might have been because it was still early in the year, only May. The scene reminded me of my first arrival in Moscow five years before. I had made the trip from Paris with a Soviet newspaperman, the Geneva correspondent of the Tass agency. His wife met him at the station with a bunch of roses which she pressed upon him before she kissed him. He introduced me, and she said shyly,

“If I’d known you were coming I’d have brought you some flowers, too.”

She had black hair and an infectious friendliness; I decided I was going to like Russia. The newspaperman then introduced me to his boss, Ivan Doletsky, who had also come to the train to meet him. Doletsky was small and gray-haired; he smiled pleasantly and said he had been to America the year before. We talked for a few minutes, and, as they walked away, Doletsky invited me to call on him as soon as I was settled. I never did; he shot himself a month later as the police were pounding on his door. No reason for wanting to arrest him was ever published; those were the purge days.

But the war had changed Moscow; I sensed it by the subdued atmosphere of the crowd at the station. The active flow of life, the keenness and buoyancy, so characteristic of street life before, was

gone. It was not so at Murmansk nor Archangel, but here, at the center of the struggle, I could feel how desperately Russia was fighting the war, and how much it had taken out of her.

There was a car to meet Reed and King; they were going to the British embassy, so I asked them to drop my bags at the Metropole Hotel. I decided to take a droshky and drive around the city, but there were no droshkys in sight. A porter told me they had all disappeared shortly after the war. That was a disappointment; droshkys had seemed to be as much a part of Moscow as the Kremlin. So I set out on foot, after refusing Reed's repeated offer of a ride. I wanted to make my first inspection alone; Moscow had many memories for me. The city is circled by wide boulevards, and I walked along one of them toward Gorki Street. There were few people abroad. Moscow had nearly four million inhabitants before the war, now it had only about half that number. The army had taken some, but the largest percentage had gone with the industries evacuated to the rear. City planners regarded this reduction as a good thing; the authorities had already notified many people they would not be allowed to return after the war. Moscow's population had quadrupled since 1917, and building projects had been unable to keep pace with the increase.

I came to the courthouse, which used to be the famous Noblemen's Club in Czarist days. It was there, in 1938, I covered one of the most extraordinary happenings I have ever witnessed, the Bukharin trial, the last of the treason cases. There were twenty-one defendants, and eighteen of them were sentenced to death. The trial lasted about ten days and ended at midnight, two days, incidentally, after Hitler had marched into Austria. According to Russian custom, the judge has to write out sentence in his own handwriting, so the court adjourned until four o'clock in the morning while Judge Ulrich penned the documents. When the recess was over, and we returned, we found the Soviet newsreel men had

installed klieg lights which they directed towards the little door through which the prisoners entered. The glare momentarily blinded each man as he stepped in front of it, but they all quickly recovered except Yagoda, who crouched, his face contorted, and clenched his fists. Yagoda, former chief of the OGPU, had headed one of the most sweeping purges in Soviet history and is variously estimated to have ordered the execution of from half a million to two million people.

So, as he crouched, blinded with fear, I felt no pity for him. But, as he was led into the dock, he recovered and resumed his habitual sneering expression. He showed no emotion when sentence of death was passed on him, although some of the others almost broke down when their own verdict was read.

I turned off the boulevard and walked up toward Arbat Square, thinking about the trial and many purges. Russia's great war record and the absence of fifth-column activity during the struggle is held by many as a vindication of the system. But former ambassador Joseph E. Davies, I think, has the right slant; Davies, a trained lawyer, attended every session of the Bukharin trial, and he concluded the men were guilty. They were guilty of opposition to the Stalin regime, and there is no doubt some of them actively plotted to overthrow the government. That, in Russia, is enough. They may not have been guilty of the crimes charged to them, some of which, like the murder of Gorki, were fantastic in the extreme. And, again, their confessions may have been extorted by mental or physical compulsion. But, accepting opposition to Stalin as a political crime, which it is necessary to do in examining Soviet jurisprudence, the men were guilty.

I was reminded of Bukharin's retort to Prosecutor Vyshinsky, now the assistant commissar of foreign affairs. He pointed his finger at Vyshinsky and said,

"You have called us conspirators, but I would remind you that when conspirators succeed they are sometimes called statesmen."

Arbat Square was deserted, and I walked over to the Smolensk subway station and took a train to the Metropole Hotel. The car was crowded with Red Army nurses, talking and laughing; they wear a dark khaki blouse with a brown leather belt, a blue skirt, and light leather boots. The uniform is becoming, and I noticed they all looked healthy and well-fed.

The subways, which I think are the best in the world, were as clean and comfortable as they had been four years before. Several new lines had been opened, and the original plan of having each station differently designed in marble and other stone had been maintained. The trains run at about the same speed as they do in London, which is somewhat slower than that of the New York subways. They are laid deep underground because Moscow, like London, has a soft clay foundation. The Soviets envy New York its skyscrapers, and, with a rocky foundation like Manhattan, they would undoubtedly build some in Moscow. The Palace of Soviets, started before the war, was designed to be the tallest building in the world, crowned with a massive statue of Lenin. The Russians imported an American architect, a specialist in skyscrapers, and he finally drew the blue-prints of a foundation that would support such an edifice. It was so deep and expensive that a private company would have had to abandon the idea as impracticable, but the Soviets adopted it. They had just completed the foundation and were ready to start building when the war broke out. Since then, they have had to dig up the whole foundation for scrap metal; some day, they will probably start again.

Coming out of the subway station near the Metropole, I looked for traces of bomb damage, but there were none. I had read a news dispatch some months before reporting that a bomb had landed

between the chancery of the American embassy and the Kremlin. Except for picturesque attempts at camouflage, the big square seemed unchanged.

The lobby of the Metropole was cool and dark, so dark that I could hardly see after the bright sunlight. The big leather chairs were where they had always been, and I heard the familiar click of the abacus in the cashiers' department. I once thought the little beads strung on racks were toys but not after I witnessed bank clerks doing fractions and decimals with them. Adding machines will never come to Russia as long as the abacus exists.

"Mr. Brown, I've been waiting for you. How are you?" said a voice at my elbow.

I turned. It was Jack Margolies, an Englishman naturalized Russian, who had been the assistant director of the hotel four years before.

"Glad to see you, Jack," I said. "You're looking thin."

"I've not been well. I was at the Grand Hotel in Kuybyshev all winter. Now I'm back here at my old job."

"How's your wife?" I asked.

"She and the baby are at Sverdlovsk. I wish I could bring them here with me."

"Got a room for me? I'd like to take a bath before dinner."

"Yes, I have a room. But you will eat in the special newspapermen's dining-room on the first floor. We've closed the main dining-room."

"Why did you do that?"

"Well, you know it has a glass roof. It wasn't safe in raids."

I walked over and looked into the dining-room; the chairs and tables had been taken out, and the pool and fountain were dry. The pool used to be filled with live fish, and every New Year's Eve somebody was pushed or fell in. The windows were boarded up, and dust covered what had been one of the most distinctive

restaurants in Europe. The Metropole had a past; in Czarist days, it was as well known as the Adlon in Berlin or the Crillon in Paris. Young gallants used to bring their ladies to the private dining-rooms that lined the balcony of the restaurant, and there they could eat choice food and watch the dancers below, or draw the curtains and sit in privacy. Later, during the days of the revolution, the Metropole was the center of action, and it still bears the scars of machine-gun bullets. The voices of Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin were once heard from the dining-room platform. But it was not for these things that I remembered it; I associated it with many pleasant evenings and much good company. It was there one night that Joe Barnes introduced me to Kyle Crichton, an American left-winger, and I listened unbelievably to what he said. Unbelievably because he was a man of such marked intelligence. It was there that Paul Robeson told me why he was having his son educated in Russia: because "it was the only place in the world where there was no racial prejudice."

And it was there that I met Lawrence Tibbett, a great guy if there ever was one, and our discussions led us from the Metropole to a tzigane club called the Aurora where we talked politics until dawn.

Margolies interrupted my recollections:

"Your room is ready, but the lift isn't working. I'll have to send your bags up later. Say, you know this hotel. Do you mind if I don't go up with you? It's on the fourth floor."

"Not at all, Jack," I said. "How's the hot water?"

"There is plenty of hot water. The reason I don't want to go up is I would have to climb the stairs. It's my heart. I'm not supposed to climb stairs. It pounds like hell if I do."

"Forget it," I said, "I'll go up now."

I went to my room and found it like all Metropole rooms: spacious, high-ceilinged, fitted with good rugs and antique furniture.

The bathroom alone was as big as the average room in a New York commercial hotel, and the tub was so long that a six-footer could stretch out in comfort. The bed was placed in an alcove with curtains so that the room could be converted into a living-room during the day.

I took a hot bath, and, while I was dressing, Walter Kerr of the *Herald Tribune*, and Larry Le Sueur of CBS, came in to say hello. I had met Kerr before in Paris, and had known LeSueur in London. Drinks were in order, and I got out my last bottle of whiskey. Kerr and LeSueur told me there was no whiskey in Moscow, only vodka.

"And we're lucky if we can get that," added Walter.

"How are things going here?" I asked.

"Well, the first thing we want to know before we can answer that is how are things going outside? What do they think of Russia? Is there going to be a second front this year?" asked Larry.

"I don't know," I said, "you've worked in London, Larry, and you know how hard it is to tell what policy the government is really following. The people are all excited about Russia ever since Cripps returned; there's no doubt they want a second front. But things haven't been going well in Africa, and I don't think they'll start another campaign until they clean up that mess."

"Then, that answers your question about the situation here," said Walter, "the Germans will throw all their weight against these people this summer, and the Russians can't hold them alone. They will have to fall back."

"Do you think they are hesitating in England because the government wants to see Germany and Russia fight it out, or because they just are not ready?" asked one of them.

"I'm sure they are hesitating because they are not ready; the other is just Communist talk. I think when they beat Rommel in

Africa they will invade Europe at the first opportunity. England can't afford to see Russia beaten, and the government knows that."

Just then, there was a knock at the door, and an old friend, Oscar Emma, a Ukrainian who had worked for me when I was last in Moscow, walked into the room. I was very glad to see him, and, after shaking hands, I poured him a drink. Oscar was a veteran assistant who had worked for a long line of American correspondents including Bill Stoneman, Ralph Barnes, and Demaree Bess. He was at present working for Walter Kerr, but Walter offered to share him with me, so I hired him on the spot.

We went down to the correspondent's dining-room, and there I met other old acquaintances: Paul Holt of the London *Daily Express*; Geoffrey Blunden of the Australian *Consolidated Press*; Robert Magidoff of NBC; and Henry Cassidy of AP. Also at the table were Henry Shapiro of the UP, and goatee-wearing, voluble A. T. Cholerton of the London *Daily Telegraph*. Cholerton, once an Oxford don, had been in Moscow fifteen years and was one of the best-informed newspapermen in the Soviet Union.

The meal consisted of cabbage soup, rice and cutlet, bread and butter, and cake and tea; waiters also sold each correspondent a package of Russian cigarettes.

There were fourteen newspapermen at the table, and I knew them all; I had met them or worked with them many times during my seven years of reporting in Europe. So it was a pleasant occasion for me, comparing notes and talking about mutual friends. Most of them had come from England on a convoy eight months before, and I asked them about the trip. There had been little enemy action, but there was one incident that they all remembered.

It seems the captain, a gruff old sea-dog, disliked passengers, and he particularly disliked newspapermen. One of the boys, an Englishman, had the habit of addressing him,

"Well, captain, old man—"

This salutation annoyed him more each time; it finally developed that his blood pressure would mount even at the sight of the English correspondent. The captain was a bachelor and had few personal belongings, but his most prized possession was a telescope that he had bought in Liverpool.

One foggy morning, the pride of London's newspaper row left the breakfast table full of good cheer and bounded two steps at a time up to the bridge. He saw the captain standing with the first mate, and, at the same time, noticed the captain's telescope in its customary rack.

"Well, captain, old man, it's a wet morning," he said, picking up the telescope to look around the horizon.

Suddenly the precious instrument slipped from his hands and fell to the deck with a tinkle of glass. The captain looked at the wreckage and seemed unable to speak as his face reddened. Finally, he found his voice.

"Get off," he roared, "get off this God-damned bridge before I kill you."

The correspondent got; in fact, he avoided the captain the rest of the trip.

At that time, there were no women correspondents in Moscow, although two arrived during the summer, Marjorie Shaw of the London *Daily Mirror*, and Irina Skariatina of *Collier's*.

After dinner, I called at the press department, which then had its offices in the hotel. Henry Cassidy introduced me to the censor on duty, a young, stocky individual named Aneuroff, whom I came to like very much. Aneuroff was a career man in the diplomatic service, had served in Tokyo, and spoke Japanese fluently. He was affable and said if I would meet him at nine o'clock the next morning he would get a foreign office car and drive me around the city. I thanked him, and he said,

"I think you will see many changes since you were here last. Is that not so, Mr. Cassidy?"

Cassidy said it was so, and then they started kidding each other. I could see they were old friends. I never saw Aneuroff angry during all the time I knew him, but I was told he lost his temper once when the correspondents visited General Dowater's Cossack regiment. Aneuroff was the conducting officer, and he felt responsible for the safety of the newspaperman. One of the Cossacks offered a reporter a ride on his horse, a beautiful white pony, and the newsman eagerly accepted. It was a wet day, and, loudly cheered by the other correspondents, he galloped over the hill out of sight. He told them later the pony suddenly tripped and fell in a mudhole; he wasn't hurt himself, but felt he should clean the pony before bringing him back to the Cossack. It took a long time, and meanwhile, Aneuroff became more and more worried. They were about ready to send out searching parties when he returned, and Aneuroff was as angry as he was relieved.

He refused to believe the correspondent's account of what happened and hoarsely whispered,

"You can never again come with us on trips."

But, a few days later, he forgave him and was his old smiling self again. This reporter, one of the best in the business, does not lead a dull life. One night he came into my room, looking pale, and sat down heavily on the bed. I asked him what was wrong.

"Well, Jim," he said, "you know that stationary parachute jump at the Park of Culture and Rest?"

I said I did, and he continued,

"Alec and I were out at the park walking this afternoon, and there were a lot of kids jumping. I watched them and decided I'd take a turn. Alec said he'd wait, so I started climbing the tower alone."

He paused, seeming to struggle with unhappy recollections, then,

"It's a hell of a long way, that tower. I mean it's awfully high. When I got to the top and went out on the platform, I looked down, and then I knew I'd been wrong. You see, the jump is really for kids, and I weigh 180 pounds. Then I noticed the parachute had a big hole in it. But the kids were waiting behind me in line, and the girl attendant was handing me the parachute harness, so what could I do? I put on the harness and walked over to the edge. I should never have looked down, but I did. It was terrible. Then I jumped and, honestly, I went down like a shot. I don't believe the parachute slowed me up at all. The fall jarred me, but I wasn't hurt."

He waited a moment, then added, "Alec was watching, and he said he never saw anybody come down so fast."

Things like that often happened to him.

After saying good night to Aneuroff, Cassidy and I left the hotel and walked out to the Associated Press apartment, which is located on the fifth floor of an old building in the Arbat section. Henry told me that his predecessor, Whit Hancock, had been killed or captured in the Pacific. Whit had been on the island of Java, and he stayed after the others had left, thinking he would send one more story. I was sorry to hear the news; I had known Hancock in London and had liked him. The apartment was empty when we arrived, except for Daniel, Cassidy's little mongrel dog. Daniel, an ageless Moscow institution, had been passed on from year to year by countless American correspondents; he had been the guest of Norman Dueul of the UP when I had seen him last in 1938. Henry and I talked for a couple of hours, and then I walked back to the hotel, intending to go to bed. In the lobby, I met King with the other Reuter correspondent, Maurice Lovell.

I had known Lovell when he worked in Rumania, and we shook hands.

"You know, Maurice," I said, "I have always wanted to thank you for the tip on the Calinescu murder. It was really Bettany who gave it to me, but I believe it was your story."

Bettany was in Poland for Reuter during the invasion and escaped to Bucharest with other newspapermen after the Germans overran the country. Lovell, who was then the permanent Bucharest correspondent, had gone to the Polish frontier to cover the entry of the Russians.

Most of the refugees from Poland stayed at the Athene-Palace Hotel, and one day while we were having lunch, Bettany was called to the telephone. He was away several minutes and returned to the table, saying,

"I've just been told that Calinescu, the Prime Minister, has been assassinated by the Iron Guard. I tried to telephone the story to London, but all the lines have been closed by the government. I'm going over to the telegraph office."

Lovell remembered the incident and said,

"It was my wife who telephoned him. I had spent a year building up contacts in Bucharest and had the tough luck to be away when that story broke. We had all the facts early, but I don't know how we did on communications. How did you make out?"

"I left Cedric Salter of the *Daily Mail* to protect me if the lines opened, and went over to Bulgaria and phoned the story to our Rome Bureau."

"How did you manage to get across the Danube?" asked Lovell.

"I hired a car from the hotel and drove to Rawa Rusku where I got an old man to row me across. It was dark when we came back across the river, and Hunt of the American Embassy was waiting on the bank with Ed Beattie of the UP and several others

wanting to be rowed over. But the old man shook his head, and refused to take them; he had had enough."

"I don't blame him," said Lovell, "there was a lot of smuggling on the river in those days, and both the Rumanian and Bulgarian frontier guards would shoot at anything after dark. I guess you must have made out pretty well on that story, then."

"No, after all that, I didn't. Larry Lehrbas of the AP got a call through to Copenhagen just before the lines were closed."

I said good night to King and Lovell and went to my room.

I thought of the aftermath of the Calinescu murder, when the seven Iron Guardsmen were taken to the scene of the assassination and shot. Their bodies were left on the street for twenty-four hours as a warning. All that, and all the other stories, seemed trivial compared with the one I was covering now.

It was pleasant to be in Moscow again, and it was exciting to be back in the atmosphere of a big story. Everywhere, during the day, I had felt the anticipation of the coming offensive; the people expected the victories of the winter to be repeated. And although the newspapermen were more cautious, I believe some of them did, too.

The next morning I met Aneuroff at the entrance to the hotel. He had a big Ziss limousine, and was in fine spirits. A Ziss is like a seven-passenger Buick; it is the Soviet luxury car; the other model is the M-1, a four-cylinder Ford with a few alterations. We drove through the heart of the city first, and I said I was interested in seeing some bomb damage. Aneuroff pointed out several places which he said had been hit, but, compared with London, there were very few demolished buildings. People are sometimes sensitive about the proportions of the raids they have experienced, so I refrained from making any comparisons, but Aneuroff seemed to know what I was thinking.

"Many other places were hit," he said, "but they have been

cleaned up by now. The Bolshoi Theatre, for example, was badly damaged."

"How do you account for Moscow coming through the raids as well as it has?" I asked.

"Our anti-aircraft," he said. "I think we have the heaviest concentration in the world."

I let his explanation stand, but I believe there is another reason. The British found that anti-aircraft only keeps bombers at a high altitude, and, even then, determined raiders will come down through the barrage. In the light of their experience, therefore, it would seem reasonable to suppose the Luftwaffe never concentrated heavy strength on Moscow. There wasn't then, and there isn't now, any good military reason to bomb the Soviet capital, other than, perhaps, that it is the capital. Important industries have all been moved away, and even destruction of the railroad yards wouldn't materially hamper the war effort.

We drove past the Dynamo athletic stadium which seats 75,000 people, and I asked him if there had been any games since the war.

"Yes," he said, "there are football games for the workers and for the soldiers on leave, but we have had to drop the organized League competition."

I saw some training planes circling over the nearby airfield, and I remembered the annual air-shows which used to be held there in peace-time. They were always climaxed by mass parachute jumping, and our editors would want long, colorful stories on the meet, while the feature writers at home wrote learned articles on whether parachute troops would be practical in the next war, or were just a stunt. The Germans copied and improved the idea, but the British and French neglected it. Lindbergh was the guest of honor one year at this show, and the American military attache, Colonel Faymonville, now a general, gave a cocktail party for him. Many Soviet great and near-great attended; it was there that Marshal

Budyonny got pleasantly tight on scotch whiskey, which he called "American wine." He and the barrel-chested flier, Vodopyanov, just back from the North Pole, drank many toasts to the Lone Eagle. But the Lone Eagle disappointed them later when he told British government leaders the Germans were unbeatable and the Russian air force was negligible. It was the same Vodopyanov who then headed the signatures of thirteen leading Soviet pilots in a statement denouncing Lindbergh, the first time, I believe, that Lucky Lindy had ever been publicly attacked.

An odd feature of that denunciation was that, whatever the motives of the Soviet government, the fliers themselves were angry at Lindbergh's abuse of their hospitality. They thought their air force was good, and nobody could convince them that it wasn't. But they had entertained Lindbergh and given him facilities for observation never granted to any other foreigner, and they themselves had asked him for criticisms. He apparently had preferred to reserve his comments until he got to London. This version of the affair might be unfair to Lindbergh, but it was the one the Soviet air force believed, and it tempered the welcome of other American fliers who came later, such as Howard Hughes, on his round-the-world flight.

Aneuroff and I swung off the boulevard and drove west on the highway leading to Smolensk. The German lines were about one hundred miles ahead of us, and we came to the first line of trenches that ringed the city. Tank obstacles, rusty steel bars sticking at an angle above five feet above the ground, were everywhere. A road guard stopped us and checked our passes. He didn't seem to recognize Aneuroff's Foreign Office card, but made no comment. The sergeant who came to look at it lost no time, but handed it back, saluted smartly, and told us to drive on. I noticed the incident because it was typical; I have never encountered rudeness from a Soviet policeman or official. I have had disagreements

with them, but they were always conducted politely; blustering is not a Russian characteristic.

We drove ten miles outside the city, passing innumerable rings of trenches and tank obstacles; besides this, there were many firing points and fortified positions, which could not be easily seen since the country is slightly hilly. We turned around at a point where there were hundreds of women digging new fortifications; some of them were using picks and shovels, and others were pushing wheel-barrows. They were brown from the sun, and most of them wore kerchiefs on their heads.

"I don't think we will build many more trenches out here," said Aneuroff; "it isn't necessary; the Germans will never again get close to Moscow."

I looked at him; he was not talking as a press official to a correspondent, but simply as a Russian. I knew he believed it, and, looking back at the serious-faced women shovelling in the hillside, I believed it, too.

CHAPTER IV

REPORTING RUSSIA

OSCAR EMMA was in my room when I returned to the hotel, and there was a woman with him. She had rather a plain face, was dark and thin, and looked as though she was recovering from illness. He introduced her simply as Anna and said,

"I think she would make a good messenger for you. All the newspapermen have girls to take their cables to the telegraph office, and you will need one."

She smiled briefly and hurriedly left the room; I said to Oscar, "She doesn't look strong to me. You know the INS is an agency, and speed counts a lot with us. Do you think she will be able to run back and forth to the telegraph office for three and four hours at a time?"

He nodded emphatically,

"Yes, she is stronger than she looks. Besides, if she works for you, she will be allowed to buy her meals here at the Metropole, and that will build her up."

Oscar had unwittingly touched upon one of the main reasons that Russians, secretaries and messengers, were willing to work for foreigners—food. The necessities of life had grown so scarce in Moscow that one could not buy all the things listed on the ration cards. There were no public restaurants, and admission to one of the hotel dining-rooms was by card only. The management of the Metropole allowed employees of newspapermen to eat at the hotel, and jobs were prized for that reason.

I called Anna back into the room, and Oscar told her she would start work right away. We typed a letter to the manager of the

hotel informing him that she was working for me and asking him to admit her to the restaurant. As she was leaving, she turned to me and said in excellent French,

"I am very glad to have this work. My husband is an invalid, and I have just recovered from an operation myself. I have been promised a small part in the opera late in August, but until then I had nothing to do."

I was surprised at her sudden remarks and talked with her for a few minutes. It developed that she was a pianist as well as a singer; at some time in her life, she had travelled and knew Paris and Berlin well.

Oscar and I then started work; I wrote a long cable of first impressions which I divided into what are called "short takes" of about one hundred words each. Newspapers like to receive a story from their correspondents in one long cable, but agencies such as the AP, UP, and INS prefer short telegrams which are put on the wires as they are received. These telegrams or "takes" are numbered in sequence for the cable editor to follow. As I finished each telegram Anna took it to the offices of the censorship in the hotel, and, when they were stamped and okayed, she brought the messages back to me so I could note the deletions. Then she took the cables to the telegraph office, which was about six blocks from the hotel.

Before lunch, I went to the press department and called on the head of the section, Polganov. He had been the *Tass* correspondent in Paris for a number of years and would speak only French or Russian, although he understood English and could read it. He was cordial and asked me to write him a note outlining the aspects of Soviet life that interested me most, and what trips and interviews I wanted. I wrote him the note; in fact, I wrote him several during the following months, but I was not granted many of my requests. Polganov, I think, did the best he could with a difficult

job; he helped me in many ways, but there was much the correspondents wanted to do that he could not arrange. He introduced me to his assistant, Koshimako, a wiry, studious young Foreign Office career-man, who specialized in the Orient. He had been in Chungking for a number of years and spoke Chinese. Polganov, Koshimako, and Aneuroff, an unusual trio, assisted by a number of secretaries, made up the personnel of the press department.

Being assigned to handle press relations should have been regarded as a promotion by the Foreign Office staff, but I have often wondered whether they considered it as such. The work had certain advantages, but it required great delicacy and tact. It could prove a stepping-stone to advancement, as with Oumansky, who went from head of the press department in Moscow to *chargé d'affaires* of the embassy at Washington and finally became ambassador. Other officials, however, had not been as fortunate; the censors were responsible for the great volume of news stories that went out daily all over the world from Moscow, and, occasionally, slips were bound to occur.

That afternoon we were all busy as the news was flashed that the Germans had launched a heavy attack on the Kerch Peninsula, at the western tip of Crimea. This was the first indication that the enemy summer campaign might be aimed at the Caucasus, and it broke the lull in fighting that had lasted three months. Dispatches late that night said the Red Army, heavily outnumbered, was retreating. The next morning, the newspapers had electrifying headlines: the Germans were using poison gas. I don't think it was a scare story. Army headquarters specified only a small amount had been used. They named the exact sector of the attack and the type of gas employed, and they admitted Russian casualties had been few. But they seemed to think it was a test; the enemy wanted to see what the Red Army would do.

The Soviets, as the Germans knew, had an excellent branch of chemical warfare. The organization, known as Osoviakim, had its headquarters for years in Leningrad; there they conducted experimental laboratories and directed the nation-wide training of youth in passive defense. So, of all the European countries, Russia was probably as well prepared as Germany for gas warfare, but they had no desire to start it. Many wild stories were printed before the war about the lethal possibilities of high-explosive bombing and gas attacks; the Russians now knew the limitations of bombing, but there was still much uncertainty about gas. No gas mask, for example, has yet been invented that is proof against every known type of attack.

Correspondents gathered that night in Cassidy's room, speculating about the day's developments. All agreed the Soviets would not use gas unless the Germans continued the attacks. A newspaperman came in with a later report from the Kerch Peninsula which said none of the casualties had been fatal; the poison had chiefly affected the men's respiratory organs, and there was a chance of recovery. Churchill was scheduled to broadcast from London, and we turned on the radio to listen to him. He began speaking slowly, his speech seemed mainly a summary of the war in the Pacific. Then, suddenly, he referred to the German gas attack and announced in emphatic tones that Britain would use poison gas against the Germans if they continued to employ it against the Soviets; the threat was categorical.

"That settles it," said one of the correspondents, "there'll be no more gas on this front."

"He's called Hitler's bluff, all right," said another, "but you've got to hand it to him; it took a lot of courage. It was a big thing to do. I think the Germans were hoping the British would let them use gas against the Russians as long as the Luftwaffe didn't drop gas bombs on England."

"It's just possible that by moving so fast Churchill has averted the start of chemical warfare."

We debated the subject until late; it still remains one of the interesting question-marks of the war. But there was no more gas used that summer.

While the Red Army continued to retreat on the Kerch Peninsula, Marshal Timoshenko, a few days later, launched an offensive against Kharkov. The attack, for a time, was successful. Then the Russians came up against the city's defenses, considered the strongest in the southwest, and there they were halted. The Kharkov fortifications had been supervised by the famous builder of the Siegfried line, Todt, and were completed a few weeks before he was killed in an airplane accident. The Germans then started driving on the Soviet left flank in the direction of Izium-Barvenkovo and pressed the Red Army back. The major campaign, however, had not yet started, and the correspondents sought interest in feature stories. We knew that some American fighter planes had been delivered to Russia and were anxious to learn how they were performing against the Luftwaffe. A trip, therefore, was arranged to a military airdrome near Moscow where there was a wing with about thirty planes, including Tomahawks, Airacobras, and Kittyhawks.

There was a slight drizzle the morning we drove out to the field, and the runway was soft with mud. About a dozen pilots received us; they were obviously veterans, some were scarred, and all wore medals. They were friendly and talked freely; they must have been told our material would be censored; at any rate, there was no restraint. I talked with one pilot who had the marks of a jagged burn on the left side of his face.

"What do you think of these fighters?" I asked him.

"Very good," he smiled, "the Airacobra is better than any foreign fighter except the German Focke-Wulf."

He hesitated and added,

"I'm afraid it is not as good as the Heinkel 113, either. I like our own fighter, the Mig, best of all. But the Airacobra is a very good plane, and I wish we had more of them."

I asked him if he had found any faults in its construction.

"No," he said, "the tricycle landing gear is a little difficult for rough fields, but that is a minor point."

There were some Russian fighter planes at another end of the field, and I wanted to look at them, but the officers plainly had no intention of showing them to us. I talked to another pilot.

"I notice you men have several campaign ribbons," I said. "Are you still doing active fighting, or are you instructors?"

"Both," he replied. "We fly at the front for a while and then serve at the schools when we need a change. These American planes are all being flown by experienced men; most of us have fought against Japan and Finland as well as Germany."

He said he had shot down four Japanese planes during the battle of Chang-ku Feng in 1938, and I asked him what he thought of the Japanese fliers. He replied,

"They are like those of every other nation; some are good and some are bad. But the Zero is a pretty good fighter plane."

The pilots took us to their mess for lunch. They had arranged a banquet in our honor, and the meal started with caviar and several kinds of hors d'œuvres followed by roast chicken, potato, and brussels sprouts, and concluded with cake and coffee. With all this, there was vodka, wine and cognac. It was one of the best meals I had had since the war started in 1939. Waiters refilled our vodka glasses as soon as they were empty, and there were many toasts. Two or three of the pilots made eloquent speeches, and the sentiments of the correspondents were feelingly voiced by an English newspaperman in a toast to the Red Army. As one of the reporters remarked,

"The heyday of hands-across-the-sea in Paris was never like this."

Four of us rode back to Moscow in a car with Aneuroff, and he told us that the press department had arranged another trip for us. We would leave for Gorki in three days to inspect a tank base where drivers were being trained in the use of British and American tanks. I had no great anticipation of the trip because I already was familiar with the types of tanks they were using and had visited units in England, but I had never been to Gorki, and I wanted to see the city.

When we reached the hotel we found that another correspondent, Leland Stowe, had arrived. Lee was fresh from India and China and had much news of that part of the world. The last time he had covered a Russian campaign had been on the opposing side, with the Finns, and he was looking forward to his new assignment.

Gorki was an overnight journey on the train, and the press department reserved one car for the newspapermen. There were no lights in the coach because of the blackout, so we pulled down the curtains in one compartment and played cards by candle-light. Poker was the favorite game until Lee Stowe persuaded us to play hearts, which, he said, was the standard pastime in Chungking. The candle, however, gave such a weak light that we finally abandoned the game and went off to our bunks. I shared a compartment with Maurice Lovell and was awakened in the morning to find him sitting on his bunk drinking a glass of hot tea.

"Where, my friend, did you get that tea?" I asked.

"There's an attendant at the end of the car with a samovar," he told me.

The tea-samovar on every pullman used to be one of the peacetime pleasures of travel in Russia, but it has largely disappeared since the war. There were none on the train when I came from Murmansk. I went to the attendant, who was feeding small lumps

of coal into the fire in the center of the samovar, and he filled a glass for me. The Russians like tea as much as the English or the Irish, although all prepare it differently. The English are connoisseurs, they are partial to different brands; the Irish simply like it strong; and the Russians are the only ones who drink it out of a glass and always like it weak.

Tank officers were waiting at the station with cars, and they immediately drove us out to their camp. It was located about fifteen miles outside of Gorki, so I didn't see much of the city, but it appeared to be less attractive than most Soviet towns. The wide avenue and tree-shaded streets that distinguish the newer Russian cities were lacking. The road wound through a pine forest, and, so well was the camp camouflaged, that we were driving through a line of tanks before we realized we were there. The slender, gray-haired commander of the unit, Col. Rodion Schabalin, invited us to his tent and outlined the day's program. He said the tanks, General Grant models, had arrived only three days before; through some mischance, operating instructions were not included with the shipment, and Soviet technicians had printed diagrams explaining the mechanism for the Red Army drivers.

"We have a seasoned crew here," he said, "and, since tanks are fundamentally the same, they have not had any difficulty. They are going to the front with them in ten days."

"You don't lose any time," said one reporter.

"No," said Colonel Schabalin, "we can't afford to. But, as a matter of fact, this is typical. It would be safe to say that British and American tanks are always in operation against the enemy within one month after they arrive in Murmansk or Archangel. It is usually less than a month, but never more than that."

We followed Schabalin out of the tent; the tanks were drawn up in parade formation with the crews standing at attention beside their machines. Like the pilots we had seen, these men appeared

to be veterans, and I wondered if it was Soviet policy to assign experts to handle foreign equipment. I asked Schabalin, and he said,

“We have more trained men than we have tanks; I wish it were the other way around. But the result is we can always put experienced men on new machines; I believe the same is true of the air force.”

The drivers we interviewed were regular army men; that is, they followed the army as a profession and had not just been called up since the war. Besides the regulars, however, the Red Army had a tremendous reserve of tank drivers, largely because of the mechanization of collective farms. Tractor drivers automatically went into the tank corps when called up for military service in peace-time, and, after their conscription period was finished, they took a refresher course with the army for a few months each year. Their places in the fields were now being taken by women.

This aspect of Russian military preparation had been conducted with the utmost secrecy, and seemed to have been overlooked by the Germans in their pre-war estimate of Soviet strength. The change from horse-drawn agricultural methods to machine-driven harvesting and plowing had been gradual and had been less noticed than some of the more spectacular achievements such as completion of the Dnieper Dam. But its military and economic importance was immeasurable.

Colonel Schabalin gave us crash helmets and overalls and invited us to take a ride in the tanks for a test performance. Three of us went to one machine. The driver was a handsome, dark young fellow, a Georgian, and he grinned amiably when we said we would ride with him. He told us his name was Ivan Sultormin, that he was twenty-two, and that he had seen action on the Briansk front. I asked him if he preferred Soviet tanks to American models.

"No," he said, "we take whatever is assigned to us."

He said he had always handled Russian tanks up to that time, but he had practiced with the General Grant and liked it.

"I don't know how it would be under fire," he said. "I notice it is riveted; our tanks are welded."

The question of riveted versus welded tanks was settled three months later when American tanks played a large part in the successful Soviet offensive on the central front. Red Army soldiers I talked with at Rzhev said the General Grants performed excellently.

Sultormin asked us to get in, and, when we were seated, he opened up a throttle, and we plunged off. He wanted to show his skill, and he gave us a rough ride. He had trouble getting out of a sand trap a few minutes later; the ground had been laid out to approximate battlefield conditions, and the young Georgian deliberately drove into a depression. His face reddened as we stalled, then the tank gripped and came out of the hole. Sultormin grinned in relief.

After the ride, Colonel Schabalin took us over to the shooting range, and we witnessed target practice with seventy-five and thirty-seven millimetre tank guns. The Russians were remarkable shots. They lived up to the tradition of their artillery, which is considered among the best in the world, and they put on a fine exhibition. One gunner earned a commendation from Schabalin by scoring eight bulls'-eyes out of a possible ten. The colonel was pleased with the performance, and he relaxed, telling jokes as we walked back to camp.

I had heard a good deal about the Red Army method of smashing enemy pill-boxes by driving tanks on top of them and turning while still astride, and I asked one of Schabalin's officers about it.

"Yes," he said. "We often do it. It's very dangerous, but it's effective."

Lunch was served at a table under the trees. It was a simple meal but very good; we were all hungry. After eating, we said good-bye to Colonel Schabalin and his aides, and we drove back to Gorki. In England, in similar circumstances, I would have asked Sultormin to look me up when he was on leave, but, in Russia, I knew a young tank driver would only be regarded with suspicion if he called on a foreign correspondent. The trip, however, had been worthwhile; the Red Army men I had met had impressed me with their confidence. They had all seen action against the Germans, and they believed they could beat them. I could report that our tanks were being put to good use.

We again played cards during the trip back to Moscow and talked lengthily about tank warfare. Both the Germans and the Russians occasionally used their tanks as miniature fortresses; that is, they would advance and then dig them into the ground with only the gun turrets left above the surface. These made excellent firing points, but the tank crew was trapped in the event of a retreat. The Red Army also used heavy tanks to transport Tommy-guns close to enemy lines; the soldiers would cling to the rear of the machine and then jump off and begin firing when within range. It was agreed that tanks were ineffective without infantry support; a favorite Russian manoeuvre was allowing German tanks to pass through their forward lines and then opening cross-fire on the Nazi infantry that followed the tanks. The German machines, cut off from their support, would have to fight their way back through heavy anti-tank fire. This ruse was often successful, except when, as occasionally happened, the Germans succeeded in consolidating their position.

When we arrived in the morning, the Metropole waiters had a pleasant surprise for us; a collective farm had sold the hotel some eggs, and we were to have them for breakfast. The waiters, all of whom were old men, seemed as pleased by the treat as we were;

they were a picturesque lot, they had been in their profession long before the Revolution, and the political change had had little effect on their lives. They seemed to be the last remnant of the old order; their spirits rose and fell with the stocks in the hotel larder. It was a matter of pride with them to keep the correspondents satisfied.

While I was writing my story, Anna informed me that the maid who usually cleaned my room had been hit by an automobile and was badly hurt. She had been hit while walking outside the hotel the previous night to inspect the blackout. It was the custom at the Metropole for one of the maids to go outside each night to see if there was any light showing from the hotel, and while doing so, she had stepped off the sidewalk. The accident was doubly unfortunate because the woman had received word only the month before that her husband had been killed in the fighting near Kharkov.

I finished my dispatches at noon, and, after lunch, I went to visit the Botkin Institute, the largest military hospital in Moscow. The director received me in his office and told me I could visit any part of the institution I was interested in, and that meanwhile he would be glad to answer questions himself. The patients were having their afternoon nap, and the director suggested we take a stroll until they were awake, when a nurse would guide me through the wards. We walked around the small park that adjoined the hospital, and I asked him if the Soviet doctors had made any new discoveries in surgery or medicine since the war.

"We have learned much, and we have made great strides," he said. "I think the records will show after the war that we have had fewer deaths from serious wounds than ever before in history."

Although he had white hair, he had the energy and enthusiasm of a young man, and he gesticulated as he talked. Groups of con-

valescent soldiers, some on crutches, passed us, and he beckoned to one of them, a sergeant who had lost an arm.

"This is my son, Serghei," he said, and turning to him asked, "How are you feeling today?"

"Fine, father," said the sergeant, nodding pleasantly at me.

"You will be released next week," said the old doctor. "I think you will be glad to leave."

"Yes, I am tired of being in the hospital."

He walked away to rejoin his friends; the director was silent for a moment, and then said musingly,

"War is a terrible thing. I didn't even know he was wounded until I saw his name on a list of new patients. The Army notifies parents as soon as they can, but there is often a long delay."

"What will he do now?" I asked.

"He is going to resume his studies at a technical institute in the Urals. Then he will enter some branch of war production."

"You said, doctor, that there were fewer deaths from serious wounds now than in other wars. How do you explain that?"

"We are able to take care of the casualties better; we can even give them emergency treatment on the battlefield. And airplanes carry the urgent cases to base hospitals.

"Then, too," he continued, "the sulfa drugs have saved many lives. We get a great deal of sulfa from America, but we need more of it. Immediate treatment of the wounded, however, is the important thing; in other wars, soldiers often died before they could be treated. We have lost countless doctors, nurses, and stretcher-bearers under shell-fire; they are doing heroic work, and the army appreciates them."

We walked back to the main office, and the director called the nurse who was going to take me through the wards. She was tall and had close-cropped brown hair.

"What would you like to visit first?" she asked.

"The director has been telling me of the work that the doctors and nurses are doing at the front. I would like to talk to some of them if there are any here."

"There are no army doctors here at present," she said, "but there are four nurses who are being treated for shrapnel wounds."

We went to see them; they were all in one ward, and they were talking and laughing. One of them had a bandage around her head, and another had her arm in a sling; the other two had leg injuries. They were young and pretty.

My guide introduced me, and I asked them to tell me some of their experiences. They began with no hesitation or self-consciousness; they said life at the front was hard, but they liked it and wanted to get back. They admitted they were often frightened, but declared that the responsibility of looking after others helped to steady their nerves.

"When we are not busy but just waiting, bombardments are bad. I'd rather be working," said one.

They went on to describe the experience of being in a shell hole when it was hit by shrapnel; the long wait before help arrived, and the relief, when they were taken to the hospital. It was a moving story, simply told; the saga of the courage of Red Army nurses has many such chapters. I thanked them for the interview and said good-bye, and my guide and I walked up to the next floor where the men were located.

There were two soldiers with leg wounds in the first room we entered. They asked me to sit down and told me they had both been hurt during a skirmish near Pogoralye. I asked them what they thought of the Germans as fighters; one talked, and the other shifted in bed to listen.

"We were overconfident at the beginning of the war," he said. "We thought we could beat the Germans easily, and then, when they drove us back, we began to be afraid of them. We didn't

stand up to them the way we should. But that is changed now. Ever since we routed them last winter we've lost the feeling that they are tougher than we are."

His companion nodded agreement, and added,

"The Fritzes had us fooled for a few months until we got to know them. Small German units are helpless if their officers are killed; they don't know how to act without orders. And they can't stand the cold. They plan an attack thoroughly and carry it through well if everything goes according to schedule, but they don't react quickly in an emergency."

The soldiers said the Germans were not cowards, but declared they hated them especially for their brutality towards Russian civilians in the occupied territory. The morale of the enemy, they admitted, seemed to be good; the possibility of defeat had not yet occurred to the Nazis.

I spent the afternoon talking with other patients and heard much the same story: quiet conviction that the Red Army could beat the Germans. In almost every case, the soldiers admitted to having had doubts about it at one time, and their present confidence was more impressive for that reason. I realized the series of unbroken defeats at the beginning of the war had hurt the spirit of the Russian army more than the world knew; the magnificent defense of Moscow did more than save the city, it had given the army new heart and new spirit. They regained confidence in themselves and drove the Germans back one hundred miles.

I left the hospital with one question answered, and it was a question I had been wondering about for a long time: How was the morale of the Red Army? It was good.

Morale is hard to define, but it is supremely important. I was in London when the British army came back from Dunkerque, and I saw it then. The soldiers' pride was hurt; it was not by any word or deed that they betrayed discouragement, but it was writ-

ten on their faces. Later I saw some of those same Tommies in Egypt after a year of fighting Rommel, and they then were different men. They walked with an easy, self-confident swing; they were sure of themselves. An army whose first engagement results in defeat, as with the British in France, and the Russians at the beginning of the war, has an up-hill road to climb. But the wounded Russians in Botkin Hospital showed me the Red Army had made the climb.

I took the subway back to the hotel, and I met Walter Kerr as I was going into my room. He told me the RAF had raided Cologne with a thousand bombers.

"That's great," I said; "it will let them know what Coventry was like. Are there any details?"

"Yes. And the Moscow evening paper has a little editorial comment on it that you might want to cable."

I wrote two stories, one on the visit to the hospital and the other with the editorial comment on the bombing.

Walter and I talked about the raid, and I mentioned that I had spent a week in Cologne in 1936. I was then en route to Berlin to help with the coverage of the Olympic Games; it seemed a long time ago.

"The funny thing about the Olympic Games is that I didn't write any sports at all," I said.

"What did you write?" he asked.

"Ghosted a daily column for Eleanor Holm Jarrett. After she had been dropped from the American Olympic team, we signed her up to write for us. Some of the papers gave her column more prominence than the news of the games."

It certainly had been a long time ago.

CHAPTER V

SICK LIST

I GOT UP one morning, went to the bathroom and, as was my habit, turned on the water to fill the bath-tub while brushing my teeth. Suddenly I fainted; I don't remember losing consciousness or falling, but, when I revived, I was lying on the tiled floor. I could not have been unconscious long because the tub had not run over; it was the sound of running water that reminded me where I was, and I tried to get up to shut it off. I found I had no strength; I couldn't get on my feet, so I was forced to crawl on my hands and knees to turn off the faucet. It was a frightening feeling to be unable even to stand up, when only a little while before I had been feeling perfectly normal. I crawled into the bedroom, resting every few feet, and I finally reached the telephone and called Oscar Emma. I told him I was sick and asked him to come to my room; then I climbed into bed.

Oscar arrived in a few minutes, and I described what had happened. Neither of us could understand it; I decided to sleep for a few hours. We agreed to call a doctor in the afternoon if I didn't feel better; in the meantime, I was drowsy. Oscar woke me at four o'clock; I had a blinding headache, my temples throbbed, and I knew I had a temperature. There was no question now but what we would have to get a doctor.

Civil doctors were scarce in Moscow, and Oscar had difficulty in finding one who could come and see me. He eventually located a retired general practitioner who consented to come to the hotel. The doctor was an old man with a tired, harassed look; he took my temperature, felt my pulse, and finally sank into an arm-chair

beside the bed and began asking questions. My head by this time was aching so badly that I answered him automatically, without paying much attention to what he was saying. It was only when he asked me if I had ever had my appendix out that I suddenly realized he didn't know what was wrong with me. I sensed it was something serious, and I knew he thought it was, too, but the lack of familiar symptoms baffled him. He gave me some aspirin for my headache and said he would return the next day. When he had gone, I said to Oscar,

"Can we buy any more aspirin? I think I'm going to need it."

"No, the drug stores haven't had any since the war. But I think you can get some from the American embassy or borrow some from the other correspondents."

I took three of the tablets the doctor had given me and went to sleep; I was delirious for three days and ran a high temperature. In the meantime, Walter Kerr had cabled my office and also notified Captain John Waldron, the physician with the American military mission in Moscow. Waldron hired a trained nurse to stay with me and called in the Kremlin Hospital doctors on the case. The Kremlin Hospital was the best medical institution in Russia; it guarded the health of Stalin and other members of the government.

My first conscious recollection was waking and finding Captain Waldron beside the bed.

"Hello, John," I said, "what's wrong with me? I wish you'd amputate my head; it aches like hell."

"You've had a cerebral hemorrhage, Jim," he replied, "we want to move you to the hospital; you don't mind, do you?"

"No. When do we go?"

"Right now. I've got the stretcher ready, and the ambulance is outside the hotel."

The words "stretcher" and "ambulance" were disturbing; they

sounded ominous. I had a sudden impulse to say I'd walk downstairs, I didn't like the stretcher, but I knew it was ridiculous; I couldn't even sit up in bed. Waldron looked relieved at my agreeing to go to the hospital; I think he expected me to argue. I owe him a great debt; he worked hard getting the best specialists for me, and he used all the influence of the American embassy to obtain a bed in a hospital. The Moscow institutions were filled with wounded soldiers; there were few spare accommodations.

They carried me out to the ambulance, and the nurse sat beside the driver while Waldron rode in back with me. Oscar Emma and Walter Kerr said they would go to the hospital on the subway. We had a rough ride; it was uphill most of the way, and every bump sent sharp pains through my head.

"Which one are we going to, John?" I asked.

"The Krasnaya Sovietskaya Hospital," he said; "it's a good place. They're going to let you have a room to yourself."

"How'd I get this cerebral hemorrhage?"

"You ruptured a vein in the back of your head; the blood flooded and pressed on your brain. That's what gives you those terrific headaches."

I went to sleep and didn't wake up until they were carrying me into the hospital, but Walter Kerr later told me of an incident that happened when we arrived. Captain Waldron, he said, went into the main office to tell the supervisor that we were there and ask her to which room I was to be assigned. She said she had no record of my case and couldn't admit me. Waldron then showed her his written instructions and suggested she could receive the admittance papers later. She walked outside with him to the ambulance but still was reluctant to make a decision. Meanwhile, the bored ambulance driver had gone around the building to smoke a cigarette. He forgot to pull the emergency brake before he left, and the ambulance started rolling down the hill with

the nurse sitting impassively on the front seat. She made no move, and I was asleep in the back. We were heading towards a stone wall when Waldron saw us, and, leaving the supervisor, he ran after the ambulance, leaped in and pulled the emergency brake just in time to avert a collision. He drove back and began arguing again with the supervisor.

She said she would look at me herself, and Waldron claims I finally made up her mind for her. He says she put her head into the ambulance, and I rose up on one elbow and said wildly,

“What time is it?”

I don't remember anything about it, but he says she hastily closed the door and said,

“Yes, he's sick. I'll let him in.”

I was delirious for about a week, and the nurses told me I fought the convoy trip over again many times. My only recollection is a strange one: attending the opera and hearing wonderful music; it is unusual because I have been to the opera only a few times in my life, and I have no appreciation of classical music. Yet this symphony seems as vivid as if I had actually heard it; I know it rose to a crescendo at the last, and I shivered with emotion and exhaustion when it ended. It may have been the memory of some music I had heard years before, and, if so, I hope some day I shall hear it again; I know I shall recognize it.

Oscar came to see me when I had recovered consciousness. He brought me some cables; there was one from my wife, filled with concern at my illness, and there was a message from Joseph V. Connolly, the President of INS. There were also cables from Barry Faris, the editor-in-chief, and Jack Oestreicher, the foreign editor. They all wished me good luck, and the message from Connolly said “we pray for your recovery.” The cables cheered me immensely; I was still too weak to sit up, but I began to take an interest in my surroundings. Captain Waldron called and said

the State Department had asked for a report on my condition; the INS had evidently asked Washington to help me. Friendship had never before meant as much to me as it did in those days.

My room was large and airy, I always had the sun in the morning, and the correspondents sent me books to read. But it was difficult to sleep at night because many of the soldiers, some terribly wounded, shrieked with nightmares, or moaned when their pain became unendurable. One man, who had lost both his legs, was out of his head for a long time, and often woke the whole floor screaming. There were tragic cases in every ward, and each man had his own story of horror.

The air-raid siren sounded one night at eleven o'clock, and almost simultaneously the anti-aircraft began to boom. There were never any lights in the hospital at night, except small shaded bulbs in the hall, and from my window I could see the searchlights playing over the city. I could not hear any planes, but I knew the firing meant there must be some in the vicinity. Most of the patients were too ill to be moved to an air-raid shelter, even if the hospital were equipped with one, so we had to trust to luck.

I thought of another occasion when I had trusted to luck, the night in London when my baby was born, December 9, 1940. The Germans that night carried out a heavy incendiary blitz, and, by midnight, many of the warehouses along the Thames were blazing. I had taken my wife to a nursing home in South Kensington early in the evening; she was in labor, and the doctors told me they would have to perform a Caesarian. She was not strong; it would be dangerous, they admitted, but it had to be done. While they were operating I paced the floor and smoked innumerable cigarettes, when suddenly a nurse burst into the room.

"Incendiaries have hit the roof, and it's on fire." As she was

speaking, three Auxiliary Firemen brushed past her and ran upstairs with pails and stirrup pumps. My heart sank; I knew that moving my wife out of the nursing home then might kill her. I raced after the firemen, and, for thirty-five minutes, I rushed buckets of water to the attic. The firemen squirted each bucket of water on the flames with the stirrup pumps, and gradually there seemed to be less fire and more smoke. Finally, the firemen said it was out; I couldn't thank them, I was too overcome with relief. The doctors came down to the waiting room a few minutes after the firemen had left.

"How is she?" I asked.

"She's all right," they said; "you'll be able to see her tomorrow."

"Thank God. Did you know the roof was on fire?"

"Good Lord, no. Is it out now?"

"Yes. The firemen have left."

"You're a funny kind of father," said one doctor. "You haven't asked us what the baby is."

"No," I said, surprised, "I haven't. Is it a boy or a girl?"

"It's a girl, and she weighs three pounds, six ounces," said the doctor. "I think you have every right to call her a blitz baby."

I christened her Karen, a name I have always liked; it suited her very well.

She and her mother had been through many air raids, but they were out of them at last. It seemed years since I had left England, and they had gone to America.

The barrage increased; there were a lot of guns around Moscow. A soldier who had been moaning all day began to shout deliriously, and a nurse hurried down the corridor. I could hear the far-off sound of airplane motors, but still there were no bombs. The firing suddenly ceased, and the searchlights went out. It was quiet, and I relaxed; I had been tense without being aware of it. Sleep seemed impossible, but I dropped off almost immediately

and was awakened in the morning by Luba filling my wash-basin.

Luba, a cheerful blond nurse, was the daughter of the supervisor; she had been at the Briansk front all winter and was going back there within a few weeks. During the lull in fighting, the military authorities had allowed her to return to Moscow and work with her mother. She was pretty and full of mischief; her blue eyes were always sparkling, and she was the favorite of the soldiers. Oscar Emma had brought me a dozen eggs; I gave them to Luba and asked her to have the cook boil me one each morning. Luba and her mother brought the eggs back to me and said the hospital couldn't accept them, but that I always could have an egg for breakfast if I wanted one. The hospital, they said, had plenty of eggs; I knew the hospital did not have plenty; no institution in Russia had enough. But it was pride and generosity combined that made them refuse to accept them; I told the supervisor I couldn't have a hospital egg unless she allowed me to give mine to the soldiers' kitchen.

"Very well," she shrugged. So it was arranged that way.

Admiral Standley, the American ambassador, visited me one afternoon, causing great excitement among the nurses. They didn't know who he was at first, but they saw the detectives, who always accompanied him, sitting outside my door, and they realized I had an important visitor. It was the first time I had met the ambassador, and, while talking with him, I was greatly impressed with both his understanding of the Soviet position and his forthright frankness. It was the opinion of the correspondents that he was doing a difficult job well, and many Russians had told me privately they regarded him as the ablest member of the diplomatic corps. Standley did not indulge in diplomatic politeness, and the Soviets respected him for his blunt honesty. He had been staying in Kuybyshev and said he had come to Moscow for an appoint-

ment with Molotov. Capt. Jack Duncan, the United States naval attache, had told him of my illness, and he had immediately arranged to come to the hospital.

"We Americans have got to look after one another," he said.

During our conversation, Luba, bursting with curiosity, came in with a pitcher of water, and I introduced her to the Ambassador. Admiral Standley shook hands with her; she smiled and preened delightedly. Unfortunately, I knew only the Russian word for "embassy" and couldn't think of the word for "ambassador," so I had to introduce Admiral Standley to her as "the director of the American embassy." Standley laughed when I told him; I'm sure the title was equally impressive to Luba.

Leland Stowe, bringing chewing-gum, cigarettes, and magazines, arrived about an hour after the ambassador left. Stowe's genial friendliness always made his company a pleasure, and I was glad to see him. He had much news; the air raid, which I had heard the previous night, had been on a small scale; two German planes had been shot down on the outskirts of Moscow, and none of the enemy raiders had reached the city. The military situation was unchanged; Molotov had returned from conferences in London and Washington, and there had been a meeting of the Supreme Soviet during which Stalin announced the Allies had agreed to the formation of a second front in 1942. This was big news. The Supreme Soviet was the title of the Russian Congress, and its sessions, which were held twice a year in the Kremlin, were colorful spectacles. I was sorry to have missed the meeting.

I covered the first session of the congress, in 1938; the auditorium was a startling racial panorama; slant-eyed Mongolians and swarthy Indians from Tadjikistan mingled with haughty Cossacks and meek Armenians. Russians seemed to be in a minority. I had heard most of the Soviet leaders speak at these ses-

sions; Molotov was a bad orator, he hesitated and frequently stuttered; Stalin needed a microphone because he spoke in a low voice, but his speeches made up in content what they lacked in delivery. Mikoyan, the Commissar of Trade, was the best speaker in the government at that time; he seldom, however, said anything of interest to the foreign press.

The doctor came to make his daily examination, and Stowe got up to leave; he said he would visit me again the following week. I insisted I would be out of the hospital by that time, but the doctor shook his head.

"You will be here two more weeks."

I was disappointed; I had already been in bed fifteen days. I seemed to be making slow progress. The doctor understood my impatience and said,

"The vein which broke when you had the cerebral hemorrhage must have time to heal. If you get up too soon, it might break again, and that would be much more serious."

He looked at me reflectively, smiling, and added,

"You are very lucky; we thought at first you had meningitis. But you haven't got it, and, if you obey instructions and rest, you will soon be well."

The doctor was a remarkable man; I knew he worked twelve and fourteen hours a day, yet he never seemed tired; he had the gift of inspiring confidence, and his ready humor made him popular with the soldiers. The hospital supervisor told me both the doctor's sons had been killed during the first three months of the war.

Luba one morning brought a slender, dark-haired girl into my room, introducing her.

"This is Nina, an old friend of mine. I told her I had an American patient, and she was interested because she has been to America. She once lived in New York."

Nina was not her name, but it will do.

The girl smiled and said,

"I studied at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. It has been a long time since I met an American."

I assumed Nina had been one of the Soviet exchange students, although they usually attended Columbia. She seemed shy, spoke hesitatingly and in such a low tone that it was almost a whisper. She stayed only a few minutes, and I soon forgot the visit. I was surprised, therefore, when she came back the next day, bringing me a book to read. It was one of Petrov's novels, and I offered to give her some of the books I had. Suddenly, she said,

"Yesterday was the first time I have spoken English in six years."

There was so much nostalgia in her remark that I looked at her curiously; Soviet citizens who had been abroad rarely referred to the experience with longing. Life in capitalist countries was not supposed to be attractive. She appeared embarrassed and added, "I have almost forgotten the language."

"But you speak without an accent," I said. "I would think you had always spoken English."

"I did until several years ago. My parents never spoke anything else to me."

The little nurse began to puzzle me; during the succeeding days, we had other conversations, and she sometimes made allusions to her former life abroad. She seemed reluctant to talk about the past, yet I sensed it was on her mind. Finally, she told me the story.

"I was born in what is now Voroshilovgrad in 1919," she said. "My father was a dentist, and he served in the army during the war. The revolutionary parties were still fighting then; there was no food, and we couldn't buy clothes. People were starving.

"My father decided to leave Russia; as an ex-soldier he was

allowed to ride in one of the box-cars of a freight train going to Leningrad. My mother carried me in her arms; she and father slept on the straw, huddled together with other families riding in the same car. We had little to eat, and the trip took three weeks.

"One of the box-cars at the end of the train caught fire, and the people in it were burned to death. The doors stuck, and they couldn't get out. I have often heard my father talk about it.

"The Government allowed us to leave the country, and we went to Kaunas, Lithuania. There my father began to practice dentistry; he was making a living, but he wanted to go to America. He saved his money, and eventually we went to New York. Then we had bad news; we were informed my father couldn't be a dentist unless he passed the American dental examinations."

I offered her a cigarette, but she shook her head and continued.

"Father was too old to study for the examinations, and his eyes were bothering him, so he sent my mother and me to live with relatives in Brooklyn, and he went back to Lithuania. The only profession he knew was dentistry; it was heart-breaking for my mother, but he didn't want her to return to Kaunas with him.

"She died a few years later; I grew up in Brooklyn, and I studied at Pratt Institute."

"How did you happen to come to Russia?" I asked.

She hesitated; I could see it was the part of the story that was most painful to her; as she began, she seemed to be repeating to herself the details of a terrible mistake, a step that she realized could never be undone.

"Having been born in Russia, I was naturally interested in what the Soviets were doing, and I started attending Communist meetings. I had finished Pratt, and I couldn't get a job. I was bitter."

The situation could be easily pictured: young Nina, unemployed, listening eagerly to the Communist attacks on the capi-

talist system, contrasting them with favorable accounts of life in the U.S.S.R.

"So I decided to leave America and come back to the land of my birth. I informed the Russian consulate I wanted to be a Soviet citizen, and I was granted a visa. My relatives in Brooklyn opposed it, but my mind was made up.

"I sailed for France, and from there went up through the Baltic States, stopping in Lithuania where I was saddened to learn of my father's death a few months before. I arrived in Leningrad in October, 1936."

The rest of the story was familiar; I knew many similar cases. Nina found that institutions and factories needed workers; there were jobs in plenty, but supervisors would not hire her when they learned of her foreign background. Secret police were then combing the country looking for enemies of the regime, and any one with foreign connections was suspect. People were afraid to be seen with her. Nina's money was dwindling; she had difficulty in renting a room. Added to her misfortunes was the feeling of disillusion; she would have returned to America, but she was not allowed to leave the country because she had become a Soviet citizen. Once she was hired by a small children's hospital; she liked the work, and she was happy. A month passed, and then she was called to the office and told she would have to go. No reasons were given, but she knew they had discovered her past. The two years that followed were hard, she was often hungry; and through it all there was the bitter self-reproach for leaving America. The purge finally ended, and Nina was able to get work.

"Are you happy now?" I asked.

She evaded the question.

"I work hard, and I don't think about things too much."

I had heard that some members of the staffs of the Moscow hospitals had fled when the Germans almost captured the city.

The uniformed police had gone out to help the soldiers, and there had been no one to keep order. I asked Nina what had happened. She shrugged.

"It is true that some of our people disappeared at that time; they came back after the Germans were forced to retreat, and there was order in the city."

"What sort of a welcome did they get at the hospitals?"

She smiled.

"The kind of a welcome you would suppose. They were arrested. But the worst case was that of a baker; he took all the flour in the hospital bake-shop, made bread, and sold it to the people leaving the city. Then he escaped on a cattle-train."

"What did the hospital do?"

"They borrowed from other institutions, but there was not much flour available. It was very bad for a while."

"Did they ever catch the baker?"

"Oh, yes, he was liquidated."

I was amused at her use of the term "liquidated." It was part of Communist phraseology and, somehow, sounded much more complete and final than "executed." The Soviets have evolved a set of cliches, such as "fulfilling the plan," "enemies of the people," "fascist aggressors," and "workers, toilers, and intellectuals." These are harmless enough, but their constant use over a period of years has made them dreadfully familiar. A Soviet newspaper makes soporific reading because of these endless cliches; the most exciting story becomes drab and colorless. A British newspaperman, who spoke Russian well, and had known the country before the Revolution, told me the daily use of this Party jargon had noticeably affected the people's ordinary conversation.

"They use these expressions constantly," he once said. "It has taken much of the color out of the language. I thought at first it

was deliberate, but they are not conscious of it; they even talk that way to each other."

This same newspaperman also said it had affected Soviet literature, but I was inclined to doubt that, in view of one of his own statements at a correspondents' luncheon. Ilya Ehrenburg, the distinguished Russian writer, was the guest of honor, and the British newspaperman had been chosen to introduce him. He spoke at some length and concluded,

"Mr. Ehrenburg's book, *The Fall of Paris*, is the best analysis of the causes of France's collapse that I have read. It is even better than my own book."

With this fulsome praise, he gave the floor to Ehrenburg.

Many of the Communist terms became familiar throughout the world during the Spanish Revolution, but there was confusion in bourgeois minds between those of the Communist Party and those of the Popular Front. The Party skillfully used the Popular Front, which was a unification of all leftist movements, as a means of achieving their own ends. They had begun this policy with Krensky and climaxed it with the weak, though intelligent, Léon Blum. The dividing line was as simple as it was subtle. The clenched fist was a Popular Front symbol and was never used by the Soviets.

An unforgettable incident took place on Red Square during the annual parade in 1937. There was a delegation from Spain, and, as they marched past the reviewing stand, the amazed Russians saw them raise their fists in salute to Stalin. The greeting of the clenched fist had previously been unknown in Russia, and I didn't see it again.

Class-war expressions, however, had seemed to creep much more into the American press than the British. I had once read a reference to President Roosevelt "purging" members of the New

Deal; a correspondent commented that it was used incorrectly, since the President had not executed them.

The time approached for me to leave the hospital, and the doctor told me he had hoped to arrange for me to spend a period of convalescence in a rest home or sanatorium.

"But they are all filled with our soldiers," he said, "and I am afraid it's impossible."

I thanked him for his efforts, pointing out, however, that it was an advantage for me to stay at the Metropole even if I wasn't strong enough yet to work.

"The other newspapermen are there," I said, "and I will be able to keep in touch with the news through them. It will help when I am ready to start again."

"That's just what I'm afraid of," he laughed. "You won't get enough rest at the Metropole, and you'll want to start work too soon. Perhaps I should keep you here another week."

I promised him I would keep away from my typewriter. Oscar Emma had been listening to our conversation, and he assured the doctor he would watch me. He kept his word; when I made tentative writing motions at my desk a week later, Oscar got so upset he threatened to quit. Then he enlisted the aid of other newspapermen, telling them I was trying to work myself to death—a flattering form of suicide which I had never been accused of trying before. He won, however; there was such a hue and cry I had to desist.

Nina said good-bye to me the night before I was released from the hospital. She shook hands, and said simply,

"You have been very kind; I have enjoyed knowing you and I wish you luck."

She had reverted to her former reserve, and was again the Nina who had learned to accept the life she had chosen.

I never saw her again.

"Tommy" Thompson, third secretary of the American embassy, kindly offered to send a legation car to the hospital for me, so I rode to the hotel in style. It felt good to be outside again, and, although I was weak, I was in fine spirits. The newspapermen gave me a grand welcome, and there were several new faces among them. Four correspondents had arrived while I was away, including Ben Robertson and Walter Graebner. Ben had come from Cairo, and he told me George Lait, the INS correspondent with the British army in the Middle East, had been dangerously ill with malaria.

"He's better now," said Ben. "George and I were both on the sick list at Shepheard's Hotel, and we kept each other company."

Eddy Gilmore and Myer Handler had come from Kuybyshev, and the first thing Myer asked me was if I still had his suit. I had won a suit from him five years before, playing poker dice in Paris; it had been a bad day for Handler. He had wandered into a restaurant where Kenneth Downs and I were just finishing lunch, and he watched us roll dice to see who would pay for the meal.

"That's something I never do," he said to us reprovingly, "I never gamble."

Downs and I laughed and started playing for five-franc pieces; Myer sat quietly for ten minutes, then said cautiously,

"I think I'll try a few francs, just for fun."

That, of course, was the beginning of the end, but it was unusually disastrous. Handler lost his money, then his watch, and, finally, he said,

"I just bought this suit in New York. I'll sell it for cash."

I bought it from him, and he again lost his capital. But Myer's bad luck that day at dice has been more than made up by his brilliant newspaper work since then; studious and reserved, he is known as one of the most thorough and dependable correspondents in Europe.

Eddy Gilmore, an old friend from London days, said he would play the balalaika for me if I would buy him one. I said I would think it over.

It was a tonic to be back at the Metropole. I knew I would soon be working again.

CHAPTER VI

RETREAT

MY OFFICE cabled advising me to leave Russia and take a vacation until I had fully recovered, but I decided to stay in Moscow. Walter Kerr and Geoffrey Blunden were going to Persia for a holiday and asked me to go with them; I thought I would regain my health sooner, however, by resting at the hotel. The doctors were still uncertain about the exact causes of my cerebral hemorrhage, although they ascribed it in general to the strain of three years of war reporting, accompanied by irregular meals, little sleep, and constant nervous tension. They ordered complete mental relaxation, no alcohol, and no cigarettes; the ban on smoking was too much, and I compromised by limiting myself to ten cigarettes daily.

I was lying on the couch reading one afternoon, and, feeling thirsty, I got up to get a drink of water. As I filled the glass, I glanced into the hallway that opened on the corridor; a tall, bearded man was standing there motionless, staring at me. Startled, I said,

“What do you want?”

The hall was in semi-darkness, and I couldn't see him very well. He made no reply, but suddenly turned, opened the door, and ran to the right down the corridor. Immediately suspicious, I went to the hallway and looked in my clothes-closet; one of my suits was gone.

I was dressed only in bathrobe and slippers, but I ran out into the corridor. The thief evidently was not familiar with the hotel because he had gone to the right, a dead-end, and he would have

to come back to reach the stairs or elevators. He soon came around the corridor and advanced towards me threateningly. He was wearing my coat and vest over his jacket and carrying the pants on his arm. We stood facing each other silently for about ten seconds, then, stripping off the coat and vest and handing them to me with the pants, he brushed past me and ran down the corridor towards the stairs. I started to run after him, but realized I couldn't catch him, so I turned into my room and telephoned to the lobby desk.

There was one of those irritating delays on the telephone that often happen in such situations; the clerk was busy, and, although I explained the urgency to the operator, it was several minutes before she could connect me. I knew the thief had escaped from the hotel by the time I finally talked to the desk. The manager quickly came up to my room, and I gave him a full description of the man. He was deeply concerned.

"You must lock your door, even when you are in the room," he said. "I think the police will soon arrest this fellow, but we have to watch that sort of thing nowadays. A detective has been assigned to the hotel for the past three months; unfortunately, he is not on duty this afternoon."

"It isn't serious, since I recovered the suit," I said, "but, if I had lost it, I doubt if I could buy another in Moscow."

He agreed.

"That is the trouble," he continued. "There has been an increase in petty stealing since the war because of the scarcity of articles like clothing."

He left, repeating his injunction to lock the door. I shared his optimism that the police would catch my bearded visitor; Soviet police were extremely efficient, they had little trouble with ordinary criminals, and the punishment for robbery was severe. A wallet was once stolen from a pilot of the RAF squadron that had

been based on Murmansk for a few months. The loss was reported to the police, and, twenty-four hours later, the authorities telephoned saying they had recovered it. The pilot called to collect his bill-fold; the contents were untouched, and the airman thanked the chief of police, saying,

"I am very glad to have this back, and, as far as I am concerned, the matter is settled. I don't want to press charges."

The police chief shrugged,

"That won't be necessary; the man was executed this morning."

The incident, of course, was not typical; criminals usually received from five to ten years in prison for stealing, but, in this case, the authorities were outraged because he had stolen from a member of the RAF. They felt he had cast discredit on Russian hospitality towards an ally.

The correspondents were amused at my experience and offered various allegedly humorous suggestions concerning what they would have done in similar circumstances; but each one checked up on his own wardrobe, and, for about three days, every one locked his door. There was, in fact, very little stealing at the Metropole; the employees and staff were completely honest, and they did their best to keep an eye on non-resident strangers. The most valuable single article I possessed, I think, was a box of sixty cakes of toilet soap I had brought from England. We were allowed to buy only one bar of poor-quality soap a week, and my laundress used it to wash my clothes. I gave a few cakes of my English soap to Russian friends; they said they had been unable to buy any like it since the war.

I had been ordered not to read too much, so I passed the hours listening to foreign broadcasts. I couldn't pick up American stations, and it was difficult to receive London in the daytime, so I used to tune in on the short-wave English-language program from

Berlin. I had never had time to listen to German radio propaganda before, and I was particularly interested in the Nazi broadcasts in Russian from the powerful transmitter at Odessa. The Soviet government had confiscated all radio sets in Russia at the beginning of the war, except those of foreigners, so the enemy had supplied village centers in occupied territory with cheap sets for propaganda purposes. The Germans were trying to encourage a Ukrainian nationalist movement, with the hetman, Skorapedsky, as their chief quisling. Skorapedsky had lived for years in Berlin, was unknown to the new generation of Ukrainians, and, as the Odessa radio occasionally admitted, Nazi efforts were not having much success.

It was the German army's brutality towards the Ukrainian civilian population that largely nullified Hitler's attempts to pose as a liberator. There were few anti-Soviet elements left in the Ukraine before the invasion, but even these malcontents were not deceived by German protests of altruism. The original Ukrainian quarrel with the Soviets had been over the question of forced collectivization of agriculture. Once this program had been started, however, it had been pushed undeviatingly to a conclusion by Lavrenti Berea, who was later promoted to war-time Commissar of Internal Security. But that had been many years before; by 1939, the Ukraine was prosperous, and the memory of the old days was dim. Peasants were enjoying benefits they had never had in Czarist days; they were satisfied. After the German occupation, the Nazis played upon the cupidity of a few individuals by dividing up the big farms into small estates with which they rewarded quislings. Then the guerrillas became active, and some of these new farm-owners were found with their throats cut. Rigorous military law was instituted; brutality and suppression were used to keep order. The Odessa radio gradually had less to say about Skorapedsky and the bright future of Ukrainian nationalists.

Oscar telephoned to read me a special communiqué issued by the press department: the army announced the Kharkov offensive was finished. They asserted it had been originally started to divert the Germans from an offensive on the Rostov sector, and they said the enemy had lost ninety thousand men killed and prisoners; their own losses, they added, had been slight.

This was the communiqué, but the correspondents thought it had disturbing implications for the future. They knew the Soviets would have taken Kharkov if they could. The fact that they not only abandoned the attempt but spoke of their initial attack as a diversion seemed ominous. Russian communiqués were carefully phrased; there were never any unnecessary words, and the mention of Rostov probably meant it was threatened. Optimistic hopes of a coming Soviet offensive during the summer dwindled.

"They are going to remain on the defensive," predicted a newspaperman. "I hope they can keep the Nazis out of the Caucasus. It will be bad if Hitler gets that oil."

"The Germans will never get to the Baku wells," said another correspondent, "but they might capture the Maikop and Grozny oil fields."

Listening to these conversations made me increasingly restless, and I wanted to get back to work, but the doctor insisted I wait a few days. An old friend, a Polish officer, came to see me one afternoon; he had been a prisoner in Russia since 1939 and had recently been released. He was on his way to Persia with his regiment and expected to join the British army in the Middle East. He said many of the Poles had no arms, their uniforms were worn out, and they would have to be reequipped by the Allies.

"Why doesn't your regiment stay here and help the Red Army?" I asked. "Why go to the Middle East?"

"I do not know," he said. "I have wondered about it myself, but those are our orders."

"Is there any bitterness among the Poles towards the Soviets?" I asked.

He smiled.

"That is a fair question, and the answer is no. We have buried the past. Poland's only enemy is Germany; when we defeat the Nazis, we can come to an agreement with the Russians."

"I hope you can," I said seriously; "it will be important for the future of Europe."

We discussed the problem, and I told him that while I was in London, Anthony Drexel Biddle, former American ambassador in Warsaw, had introduced me to General Sosnokowski. The General was then a member of the Polish cabinet but later had resigned when General Sikorski signed the Moscow agreement with the Soviets. Many Poles thought General Sosnokowski was right; no one could impeach his record as a patriot, he had fought the Germans to the last. He was sincere and had much personal charm; I could understand his viewpoint, although I didn't agree with him. General Sosnokowski was convinced the Polish government should not sign an agreement with the Soviets until the Russians promised to restore Poland's pre-war frontiers. Stalin would not agree to such conditions. So Sikorski went to Moscow and signed an agreement which left the question of frontier demarcation open until after the war.

The officer nodded and said,

"I think Sikorski's policy was right. The only hope of Poland recovering her territory is a German defeat, and we can't beat the Nazis without Russia."

He got up and walked over to the window.

"But it is more than that," he continued. "We are paying for our past mistakes. We should have cooperated with the Soviet Union before now."

I agreed with him. I remembered attending one of Litvinov's

press conferences in Moscow, just before the first Munich agreement, in which he announced that if Czechoslovakia were invaded, and Britain and France came to her aid, Russia would march also. One correspondent asked him how the Red Army could do it, since the Soviet Union had no common frontier with Czechoslovakia. Litvinov looked significantly at a Polish newspaperman and said,

“Where there’s a will, there’s a way.”

It seemed to be a hint that “the way” might be through Poland. The Polish correspondent reddened and said, almost audibly,

“Poland will fight either Russians or Germans if she is invaded.”

The Polish newspaperman was voicing the attitude of his government; Poland was unwilling to be used as a corridor for Soviet troops. Cynical observers said Litvinov was on safe ground in promising Russian aid because he knew England and France would not fight for Czechoslovakia. But I think that is unfair to Litvinov; I believe he saw the Nazi menace from the beginning. Distrust of Russia was not the sole explanation for British and French reluctance to act.

My friend picked up his cap and shook hands with me.

“It has been a pleasant discussion,” he said, “but my train leaves in half an hour. I hope I shall see you in Warsaw after the war.”

I had a bottle of vodka which I gave him for the trip; he was profuse in his thanks. He had had a rough two years in prison camps, but, like many another Polish soldier, he had retained his spirit and was ready for new battles. He thought of the past objectively and without bitterness; I believe the Poles would have fought well beside the Red Army. They were sent to the Middle East, it was said, because the Russians could not equip them, having barely enough for their own soldiers.

The doctor brought another specialist with him the next day, and, together, they checked me from head to foot. They concluded

their examination by announcing I could start work, although they cautioned me to go slowly at first. I telephoned Oscar and Anna, telling them the news and asking them to report in the morning; they were pleased, and Oscar was particularly enthusiastic. He immediately came to the hotel with plans for the future; he had a dozen ideas for stories, which he had thought of while I was in the hospital, and we discussed them at length. We were impatient to begin; the idleness had irked Oscar as much as it had me.

Maurice Lovell, the Reuter correspondent, was returning to England, and the newspapermen gave a farewell dinner for him. Vodka had been found for the occasion, and there were many toasts to Maurice, who had been extremely popular. I couldn't drink, so I sat next to a newspaperman who was also involuntarily on the water-wagon; he said he was just recovering from an attack of dysentery. He looked pale and worn.

"They damn near killed me," he said. "They thought at first I had something else, and they gave me a physic. Talk about bringing coals to Newcastle!"

As the evening progressed, the toasts, as is usual with such occasions, became more eloquent; the boys seemed to want to outdo each other. Simple tributes and friendly remarks changed to laudatory speeches of some length; Lovell sat through it all good-naturedly and even made a witty speech of acknowledgment. But one correspondent topped the evening by collecting some of the choicest compliments used during the speeches and addressing them to Lovell in what he called "a final tribute to Maurice." He began solemnly, the boys caught only occasional phrases of eulogy, and it was a few minutes before we realized we were listening to expert double-talk. It was funny because it was unexpected, and the party was less serious for the rest of the evening. Maurice said it was a great farewell.

Oscar and Anna arrived early the following morning. There

was much news, most of it bad; the Germans were attacking opposite Voronezh, key railroad town on the east bank of the Don. It was the first time they had reached the river. Further south, the retreating Red Army had blown up the Donetz Basin coal mines. The loss of the rich coal mines was serious, and the government immediately took action. They combed the less essential industries and took one worker in every four; they drafted boys over fourteen and girls over seventeen; they called on old men beyond the age of military service; and they sent all these new recruits out into the forests to cut and pile wood. These people were the country's last manpower resources; many of them were not accustomed to manual labor, but they did heroic work. Moscow alone had 100,000 men, women and boys sawing and chopping in the woods outside the city, and other towns had the same proportion. It did not make up for the loss of the coal mines, of course, but it helped. The government planned to haul the wood into the cities on sleighs after the snow fell.

I talked to one of the girl woodcutters; she had previously been a tool-maker, and I asked her about her new work.

"Well," she said slowly, "it was very hard at first, but I am used to it now. I sleep well, and the food is good; I must admit I feel better."

"How about the other girls?" I asked.

"They say the same," she said. "Our only complaint is that it ruins our clothes and makes us sun-burned. Look how brown I am."

She had what an American girl would call a "perfect tan," which is less popular in Moscow. Many Russian girls do not like to get sun-burned; I have never discovered the reason, but I think it has something to do with the age-old differences between city girls and country girls. Feminine Muscovites feel that a browned, out-door appearance makes them look countrified.

"The front-line girls get sun-burned," I said.

"Yes, but they wear uniforms," she smiled, "and everybody admires their weather-beaten complexions. Seriously, though, we don't mind; we want to do all we can. They keep us in the forests for only two months, and then they send a new group to take our places."

"How were you selected?" I asked.

"The forestry superintendents went along the line picking out one girl in every four, in the factory where I worked. Then we had physical examinations to see if we were strong enough. The others will have to take their turn later."

"Did the doctors excuse many of the girls because of their health?"

"No, not many," she said. "It was not necessary."

The Metropole, already short-staffed, had sent its quota of maids and waiters to help gather wood; they left cheerfully. Many of them, especially the old waiters, had never done heavy work in their lives, but they accepted it uncomplainingly. The way in which the Soviets were meeting the shortage of fuel was typical of the manner in which they handled every war-time emergency. When Russia faced loss of its sugar supply because of the capture of the sugar-beet fields of the Ukraine, they planted new crops in the warm southeastern regions of the Soviet Union. One of these districts lacked water, so they built a canal fifty miles long, transforming a barren area of 60,000 acres into completely fertile land. Much of the labor was done by hand. But although these efforts helped, they were inferior substitutes for what had been lost; each military defeat was a blow to the national economy.

The German offensive was gaining momentum, and more bad news followed the earlier reports: the enemy had made their first crossing of the Don River at Tsimlyansk. Many of us had privately thought the Red Army could make a stand at the Don; the Mos-

cow newspapers had been confident the retreat would be halted there. Now they were forced to admit rivers were ineffectual as military obstacles; pontoon bridges capable of supporting tanks and trucks could be constructed in a few hours. Difficult terrain had become an outmoded expression in modern warfare.

The fall of Rostov was equally disturbing; the city had been lost once before and had been recaptured during the winter after hard fighting. The Russians had been in possession of the Gateway to the Caucasus, as Rostov was called, for several months and had ample time to prepare its defenses. Something had gone wrong and there was no explanation.

"It's funny about Rostov," said one correspondent. "It fell very quickly, almost as soon as Voroshilovgrad. The Russians have been good at defending cities up to now; look at Leningrad and Moscow and Sebastopol. The situation must be bad."

During the days that followed, vague reports began to reach Moscow concerning the defense of Rostov; it was said the city had been given up without much fighting. We were inclined to doubt these rumors; things like that were not happening in Russia. Then the official army newspaper, *Red Star*, published one of its famous self-criticism articles; the editors stated flatly Rostov need not have fallen as soon as it did. They charged the military leaders with inefficiency and mismanagement and hinted at evidences of panic within the ranks.

The correspondents discussed the *Red Star* article lengthily, and it was generally agreed that its publication was a good thing.

"It clears up the mystery, and it ends these rumors," commented a newspaperman. "If they published such an article, you can be sure they'll do something about it. Maybe they needed some changes."

I talked with Russian friends and asked them their reaction to the Rostov story. They approved of it being aired in full.

"It's the only way we can correct our mistakes. In any case, the enemy knew what happened," said a Soviet reporter. "We can't afford to repeat those errors, and we can't tolerate incompetent generals. Self-criticism is a sign of strength, not of weakness."

No names were published in connection with the *Red Star* denunciations, but, if there had been, the people would not have been unduly surprised. It was taken for granted that those responsible had been punished or removed, and it was considered fitting that this should be so. Even in peace-time, positions of leadership carried greater rewards for merit and greater punishment for mistakes than ordinary jobs.

I recalled that in 1938 a Russian acquaintance approached me and said he had just been offered the management of a factory restaurant. The position carried with it a comfortable salary and a furnished apartment.

"It's a great opportunity," he sighed, "but I will have to refuse it."

"Why?" I asked, surprised.

"Well," he said, "I think there is a little grafting going on among the waiters in that restaurant. They will catch them sooner or later, and, when they do, they will arrest the whole bunch. If I were manager, they would arrest me also."

"But you are innocent," I said.

"I know," he replied, "but I would be held responsible. A manager is not supposed to have any grafting going on under him. If I took the job now, I would have to have the waiters arrested, and I am not sure I could prove the charges. Then I would be in a worse fix. No, I think I will keep my old job. It isn't much, but, at least, I can sleep peacefully at night."

The Soviet system was severe; it fixed responsibility with a finality that sometimes led to injustice, but it bred leaders who

were chary of making mistakes. They knew they could not make many. And it kept out individuals who were attracted by the rewards for success but fearful of the punishment for failure.

As the Germans swept forward in the southwest, reports increased of guerrilla activity behind the enemy lines. We knew the partisans were damaging enemy supply lines, blowing up bridges, and dynamiting trains, but I wanted to get a first-hand account of their methods of warfare. I mentioned this one day to Lipischinskaya, the ballet star, and she said several guerrillas would be present at a youth anti-fascist meeting which she was organizing. She was constantly engaged in war work outside the theatre, and, being popular with the soldiers, she was very successful. Newspapermen were invited to the meeting, she said, and I told her I would be there.

I arrived early with several other correspondents, and Lipischinskaya introduced us to the speakers. There were Red Army men and women in uniform, tank-drivers, parachutists, and nurses; and there was another non-uniformed group which she identified as the partisans and introduced only by their first names. They made a colorful assembly, the cream of Soviet fighting strength, each one picked by his or her unit at the front to represent them at Moscow. It was a holiday, and the big hall soon filled with workers, eager to hear the fighters' experiences. The stories were simply and artlessly told, some more exciting than any fiction I have ever read, but I was most interested in the narrative of a girl guerrilla called Valentina. She talked fiercely, with a sort of inner intensity that communicated itself to her listeners. She said that she and her comrades in a single operation had burned seventeen houses and eight barns. In this fight, she herself shot seven Germans and capped it by throwing two hand grenades into a hut where three Germans were hiding.

"That finished them," she remarked grimly.

The guerrillas had crept up to the German garrison at night, surprised them, and wiped them out. I had been inclined to doubt some of the partisan tales published in the Soviet press, but I thought Valentina was the real thing. She was only nineteen and looked boyish with her close-cropped, blond hair, but she was hard, her eyes had a cold glitter, and she rarely smiled. She was small and wiry, and wore a blue suit with a red kerchief, the latter being the insignia of the Pioneers, the Soviet girl scouts.

Lipischinskaya brought her over to the newspapermen after the meeting; she was limping slightly, and I asked her what had happened.

"I dropped a machine gun on my foot," she said.

She told me she was born in Kharkov and brought up in a children's home; she didn't remember her parents. She had worked in a sports goods shop until the war began and then joined the guerrillas. She said she had served eight months behind the German lines and had been decorated with the Order of the Red Banner. I asked her to tell me a little about partisan life, and she said,

"Our kind of fighting is best in spring and summer when we can camouflage our hide-outs; it is more difficult in winter because we leave tracks in the snow. There used to be another girl with our band, but she was killed recently. Our main job is cutting the German lines of communication."

"How do you live?" I asked.

"We can always get food from the people; it was cold last winter living in dug-outs, and I sometimes stayed at friends' houses."

Valentina was married; her husband was with the army in the Caucasus, and she said she had not seen him for several months. I asked her what she wanted to do after the war. She thought she would return to her old job in the sports goods shop, but she said

she wasn't sure of this. I could see that she had no thoughts for the future; she lived too much in the present.

While we were talking, she called over a tall, young fellow whose head was completely shaved. He was a guerrilla leader and had spoken at the meeting; he was wearing the Order of Lenin, and I sensed that he was a person of some consequence by the deference with which the others treated him. Sergei, as she addressed him, and Valentina appeared to be old friends; he bowed with unobtrusive politeness and said,

"Valentina can tell you much about our work. She is a good partisan."

She appeared pleased at this praise.

"I am not a member of Sergei's band," she said. "Ours is smaller. But I have been on a few attacks with him when our bands joined forces."

"Do you do that often?" I asked.

"When we are not strong enough to accomplish our mission alone we ask other bands to help us," said Sergei; "but, in general, we operate in small groups. Partisans are most effective that way. We rarely concentrate in one place."

"How big is your band?" I asked.

"We have forty sharpshooters, including five girls," he replied. "It was larger originally, but fourteen have been killed. We tried to do too much at first, but now the army helps us; communications with headquarters are better, and we know how to get through the enemy lines."

"Does the Red Army aid you very much?" I asked.

"Oh yes," he answered. "Recently we located an isolated German garrison which was policing a farming district seventy-five miles behind the lines. We sent word to our own lines, giving all the information that was needed, and, a few nights later, two hundred parachute troops were dropped. They surprised the garri-

son, and the Germans surrendered; the parachute troops got back to our lines with their prisoners."

Sergei and Valentina answered a few more questions for the newspapermen, and then said good-bye and left the hall. I saw them on the street once or twice during the following week, and they nodded politely. They didn't look like guerrillas; they were not different from the other people passing by. And it struck me forcefully that this similarity to the average was the characteristic I had noticed about them from the beginning.

CHAPTER VII

CITY IN SUMMER

"BE READY at five o'clock tomorrow morning. The cars will be waiting in front of the hotel."

It was Polganov, chief of the press department, telephoning to give me details of a trip to the central front. His voice was brisk and business-like; he enjoyed planning field-tours, it was a relief from the monotony of censoring news stories. I assured him I would be on time, and he continued,

"It will be very interesting. We are going to the Rzhev sector."

Oscar was in the room, and, as I hung up, he said,

"It is too bad they haven't room for secretaries in the cars. I would like to go along. I have not been to the front since the war started."

In peace-time, he had always accompanied me on stories; he was a good reporter, with an eye for color, and I liked having him along. But travel restrictions made it necessary to leave him at home, so he missed what he considered the best part of his work.

Polganov had been optimistic when he said the cars would be ready at five o'clock in the morning. They were half an hour late, and the correspondents paced up and down in front of the hotel waiting for them. The air smelled clean and fresh, and the sun was starting to come up; we would have good weather. Two policemen stared at us curiously. They were the only other early risers; the streets were deserted.

We had four cars, Ziss limousines, and the chauffeurs drove up to the hotel in an apologetic burst of speed. They said they had been delayed because one of the cars had had a flat tire. That

sounded like a bad start for a long trip over rough roads, and, when a chauffeur pointed to the tire, we noticed the rubber was worn thin. He had a good spare, however, and, since we were anxious to leave, we decided to take a chance. I was assigned to a car with Walter Kerr, Larry LeSueur, Henry Cassidy, and Walter Graebner, and, at the last minute, Aneuroff, of the press department, joined us. He was a genial companion, and, although we were crowded, we were glad to have him with us.

We drove out of the city to the Smolensk highway and were soon passing through battle-scarred villages. Most of the houses had been burned by the retreating Germans, and Aneuroff gave us the history of the various engagements that had been fought in the area. He pointed out the hill where the famous Panfilov guardsmen fought to the last man; heavily outnumbered, they held up the Germans for hours. When one of the guardsmen, panic-stricken, had tried to surrender, he was shot as a coward by his comrades, and the rest died where they stood. We entered the village of Istra. Only a few blackened chimneys remained of the former prosperous settlement, testifying to the heavy fighting which took place there while the Russians were still retreating.

A loud bang interrupted our conversation, and the car ahead of us stopped beside the road. It was a blow-out, the same tire that had been repaired before we left. The chauffeur got out, shook his head expressively, and said,

“Chort!”

This expression is the commonest term of profanity heard in Russia and means “devil”; the driver had cause to say it many times before we finished the trip. The other three cars drew up beside the road, and we all got out and stretched our legs while he changed the tire. A group of little boys and girls from nearby farms gathered to watch; they were poorly clothed but seemed healthy and not undernourished. One of the correspondents began

talking to them; they said their parents had returned to the district after the German retreat. A boy, who apparently was the leader of the group, had lost all the fingers of his right hand, and the rest of his arm was scarred. He was asked how it happened, and he smiled embarrassedly. It developed he had picked up a bomb or a hand grenade in his front yard; he had thought it was a dud, but it exploded. He admitted that his parents had warned him about unexploded bombs, and said his accident had resulted from not paying attention. It seemed to us a heavy price to pay for a mistake, but his main regret was that it would prevent him from becoming a soldier when he grew up. They were cheerful urchins; they appeared to be having a good time. I remarked to a newspaperman,

"I'm surprised to see them so happy."

"I know," he said, "it's remarkable. With all this destruction around here, you don't expect to see laughing children."

The Germans had evacuated the district almost a year before, and life was rapidly returning to normal. The memory of the invasion and the loss of their homes had been dulled for the peasants by their new interest in reconstruction; there was no time for thinking about the past. Our chauffeurs finished changing the tire, and we started off once more, the children waving good-bye. The front was only about one hundred miles from Moscow, and we had already covered half the distance. The road, which had been torn up by tanks and army trucks, became rougher, and finally, we turned off the main highway and took a dirt road northwest. This also bore the marks of heavy traffic; it had probably been favored by supply vans because it wound through the woods and offered concealment from the air. The forest was exceedingly swampy, and the drivers were having difficulty getting through the mud and deep ruts. Several times we were almost stuck, and, just as we were wondering if we could go much

farther, we came to a "corduroy road." A "corduroy road" is one which has been constructed by laying medium-sized tree-trunks across the highway; it is not unlike driving along a washboard. I had seen them before in Archangel, but there they were a constant necessity and were used all year round. Consequently, the trees were planed even and were as smooth as a macadam road.

The new road had been built as a hasty military expedient; it was adequate to get trucks and tanks through the mud, but it made hard going for the Ziss. Our driver shuddered as the springs took shock after shock, each one a little worse than the previous; he had cleaned the car for the trip, and it was now splashed to the roof. He grinned sourly when a correspondent said,

"Now we won't need any camouflage."

I began to understand the ease with which the guerrillas went back and forth through the German lines. It would be impossible to patrol the forests thoroughly; we were told that paths ran through the swamps, but that they were regarded as dangerous even by inhabitants of the region. The sound of distant firing became audible; we were about ten miles from Rzhev. A sentry stopped us and examined our passes. He told the chauffeurs to drive far apart and warned us that the Ziss limousines might attract the attention of enemy planes because they looked like staff cars.

"The Fritzes will drop a few bombs if they see you," he said. "Don't take any chances."

The rumble of artillery grew louder as we neared the front; we came out of the swamp on firm ground, and the corduroy road ended. A motorcyclist signalled us to follow him. We had been heading directly towards the German positions; now we turned right and ran parallel to them. We drove in this direction for a few miles and then halted under a clump of trees where three

officers were waiting. They said we would have to walk to headquarters.

"It is about a mile away, but we couldn't risk taking those cars. They are too conspicuous."

We followed a path through the woods, walking in single file because of the mines and booby-traps, which the officers said had been laid in this region both by the Germans and the Russians.

"We know where our mines are hidden, but we don't know where the Germans' are," said an officer. "A company of sappers is expected here next week to clear them up."

"Can they find all the mines?" asked a correspondent.

"Not always," replied the officer. "It is quite possible that a grazing cow will be blown to pieces here twenty years from now, and the herder will run home thinking he has seen ghosts."

"Our sappers go through the woods first with instruments that detect any kind of buried metal," said another officer. "They generally get them all. Incidentally, a farm that raises pigs never has to worry about mines. They will explode any that are left."

"Why pigs?" asked a correspondent.

"Their feet are sharp and sink in the ground, and they are heavy. Then, too, they run about rooting, and they cover a wide area."

We arrived at headquarters, which was a group of tents with a long table and an open kitchen fire set in a clearing. Four girls in uniform were preparing lunch; one was bringing wood, another was peeling potatoes, and the other two were stirring steaming kettles. They were unusually pretty, and a newspaperman remarked,

"If all front-line girls are like this, I think I'll join the Red Army."

One of the officers heard him and answered in English,

"I will introduce you to them."

The newspaperman looked embarrassed and said,

"I'd like to meet them, but I hope you weren't offended by what I said."

The officer laughed.

"No, no," he replied, "we think they are very pretty, too. But they are all married and true to their husbands."

I was walking behind the officer, and I said,

"You speak English very well. How did you learn? Have you been in England or America?"

"No," he said. "I studied it at the army school. I sometimes write articles for our military magazines, and after the war, I would like to visit other countries for material. That is the reason I concentrated on English."

The regimental commander conducted us to an advanced firing post about three miles from Rzhev and gave an account of the recent advance. As he talked, we could see occasional puffs of smoke from the German lines across the flat plains ahead of us, followed by the whine of shells and the crack of explosions.

"Do you expect to capture Rzhev soon?" asked a correspondent.

The commander shrugged.

"I don't know," he said. "It depends on our orders."

"Then you think the army could take the city if they were ordered to do so?"

The commander turned to his questioner and said seriously,

"I believe we could enter Rzhev in a week if we were ordered to do so. But it would be difficult. The Germans have fortified the city on all sides. I think the best plan would be to continue our present offensive and by-pass Rzhev. We can cut it off from supplies; they will have to surrender eventually."

"But the railroad lines running through the city are important," said the correspondent. "As long as the Germans are there, neither

of you can use them. Having the railroads would strengthen your position."

The commander smiled.

"That is the reason I said it depends on our orders. The general staff may decide that we need Rzhev enough to begin an assault. I don't know; it is a matter for headquarters."

There were no more questions, and the commander said,

"I do not think this artillery exchange will develop into anything, so I would like now to show you the village of Pogoralye-Gorodische which we recaptured last week."

We walked back to headquarters, and the commander then led the way to our cars. He said the village was five miles away and added,

"Pogoralye-Gorodische is really two towns. A small river runs through the center, and Pogoralye is on one side and Gorodische is on the other. For several months, we held trenches on both sides of Pogoralye while the Germans were five hundred yards away from us flanking Gorodische."

We drove to the center of Pogoralye and stopped in the midst of a crowd of returned villagers. They were carrying all their belongings, and here and there, women were cooking over open fires; the only men among them were either very old or very young. The commander pointed to a large wooden barracks.

"We gave them that as a shelter. As you can see, there is nothing left here, but they will build new homes. The army will look after them until they are settled."

"Does the Red Army give much assistance to the peasants in the war zone?" asked a correspondent.

"Yes," said the commander, "we try to bring the former inhabitants back to a liberated area as soon as we can. We need all the food they can raise, and we want them to re-build their houses. A man works better when he is at home."

We left the village and walked along the road towards the trenches. Two correspondents started to take a short-cut across the fields, asking one of the Russian officers to come with them, but he declined.

"No, I do not think it is safe. We have not finished cleaning up the mines in any of this area yet."

They hastily came back on the road, and one said,

"Have there been any casualties recently through stepping on mines?"

"Yes," said the officer, "we buried what was left of a man yesterday. I will show you his grave. He was killed in a field that had been cleared, but the rain must have loosened up the earth. It was a mine the sappers missed."

I was first impressed when I saw the trenches by their narrowness; there was barely enough room for two men to pass. I commented on it to an officer, and he said,

"Airplanes. Bombs from the air have changed the whole theory of protection. Trenches have to be narrow. Mortars have also improved; the Germans have a new mortar with several barrels that is very accurate."

He smiled and added,

"But we have our 'katusha'!"

The katusha was the name the Red Army gave to one of their secret weapons. I had heard many stories about it, but I had never seen it; some said it was a special kind of mortar, others said it was a heavy gun.

The hardships suffered by both the German and Russian soldiers during the seven months they had faced each other across the valley could be seen by the condition of the trenches. The sleeping quarters were cramped and filthy, there was no drainage for the latrines, and bare dug-outs were the only protection against rain and snow.

"The cold was the worst of all," said an officer. "We had to move to keep warm, and there wasn't much room to exercise. Snipers were always watching for some one careless enough to show himself."

We crossed the stream to the former German positions; they were completely wrecked, and debris such as helmets and broken equipment lay everywhere. Strands of barbed wire showed where the Soviets had made their initial break-through. The commander paused at the remnants of a gun position.

"There was heavy bayonet fighting here," he said. "This firing point overlooks the whole valley; it was the best situated, and they tried hard to keep it."

The hill was steep below the trenches, and the Russians must have had to crawl up without protection to make the attack. There were no trees or covering of any kind. The commander continued,

"Our attack was really a surprise, although the Germans knew we were making preparations and even brought up reinforcements to meet it. We started a barrage at ten o'clock at night, and, shortly after midnight, we made our first assault. The Germans thought it was the main attack, but we used only shock troops, keeping our regular infantry in reserve. We were beaten off, and, for about two hours, the front was quiet. Then, at three o'clock, we attacked in full strength, taking the enemy by surprise. They never recovered; we had every position before dawn."

The account of the engagement appeared so simple that one of the correspondents expressed amazement that the Russian strategy was successful, that the Germans were caught off-guard.

"It was simple only as I explain it," said the commander. "The plan was much more complicated than it sounds in bare outline. We had to convince the Germans that the first attack was the real one; we thought their success would make them over-confident and cause them to relax. And that is exactly what happened, to a

greater degree even than we had hoped; at least half their troops were sleeping when we attacked the second time."

"The first attack must have been costly, since the enemy was expecting it," said a correspondent.

"Yes," admitted the commander, "but it was the only way in which we had a chance of success. We had to convince them we were putting everything into the assault. We had less casualties than we would have had by any other method."

The lines were so close together that preparations or unusual activity by either side would have been noted immediately. I remarked on this to one of the officers, and he said,

"The nerve strain during the week before we attacked was very great. The German reinforcements started arriving almost as soon as our own; and yet, we were glad to have action again; seven months of waiting is too long."

He pointed to a ridge and continued,

"The Nazis used to have a loud-speaker there; they would give us propaganda and music all day and sometimes at night. We had our own loud-speaker to address their troops. The noise when both amplifiers were working got on my nerves more than the firing; they kept it up constantly."

A machine-gun with several belts of ammunition was lying near a dug-out, and the commander looked annoyed when he saw it.

"I thought all the guns had been cleaned up. There is no excuse for this," he said.

One of the officers made a note of the machine-gun; it was obvious nothing was wasted. He showed us the grave where the soldier who had stepped on the mine had been buried. There was a simple cross on the mound with the man's name written on it. I wondered where the men who had been killed in the recent battle had been buried, but I didn't ask. It would have looked like an attempt to discover the extent of Soviet casualties. Bomb

craters and shell holes were on both sides of the hill; the commander stepped around one of the craters and said,

“This one was made by our ‘katusha.’”

“Katusha” again! I had noticed on almost every field trip the officers made mysterious references to the weapon. They seemed to enjoy our efforts to find out what it was, and I had begun to suspect it might be some kind of a joke. This was the first time I had seen what it could do. The hole looked too big for a mortar and too shallow for a bomb, although a light bomb might have the same effect. The commander listened to our speculations, but he made no comment.

Polganov said we had better return to camp if we were going to drive back to Moscow that night. The officers were giving us dinner before we left. We walked into the village where the cars were supposed to be stationed, but they were not there. After waiting a few minutes for the chauffeurs, we started hiking the five miles to headquarters. They met us when we had gone about half-way; there had been another flat tire on the same car, and this time they had found the reason. The rear wheels were out of line, and the friction quickly wore out the tires when they drove fast. They had straightened the wheels, they said, and expected no more trouble. It was getting dark, and the commander thought it would be safe to drive closer to the camp than we had in the morning. He directed the chauffeurs across several open fields and asked them to leave the cars in a nearby pine grove. We followed him through the woods, smelled the cooking of food before we came in sight of the camp, and I suddenly realized I was hungry. The four girls had already set the long table and were busy around the fire. I sat down on a log, and another newspaperman came over to wait with me. He was not a regular correspondent but a special writer who had been visiting Russia and lecturing about it in America for years. I didn't agree with many of his views, but I

liked him personally. He was carried away with enthusiasm this evening.

"Look at this," he waved at the camp-fire. "Where else in the world would you find anything like this?"

Without giving me time to answer, he continued,

"It's wonderful. I wish I could be with them all the time."

"Yes. It's pretty nice," I said.

"It's more than that. We lose a lot by living in cities," he went on, and, for ten minutes, he talked about his longing for an outdoor life, especially with the Red Army. He was one of the most urban people I knew and undoubtedly would have been miserable after two days in the woods. I was rescued from this discussion by the dinner-bell, but I hadn't been bored; his enthusiasm, I thought, was genuine, and it explained the unreal note in his writing. He lived emotionally and on quick impressions; I was sure he had never thought of rain and snow in connection with camping in the forest. As we were seated at the table, I said,

"I'm not as fond of camp-life as you are, but I agree with you about wanting to be with the Red Army. That should be our job. These quick trips to the front are not enough."

He agreed.

"I've tried to tell the press department that many times, and I think their attitude will change before the war is over."

"What makes you think so?" I asked.

"They don't regard America and Britain as allies yet; we're friendly nations, but there isn't very close military cooperation. An Allied invasion of Europe will change all that, and I think then the correspondents will be allowed permanently at the front."

The usual bottles of vodka were on the table, and the commander asked us to fill our glasses. I was still on a dry regimen, but I took a little red wine. The cabbage soup was excellent and was followed by roast beef and potatoes; there were liberal help-

ings. During the meal, Polganov announced we would not start back until dawn; he said he did not want to drive at night without headlights. Several of the correspondents insisted they had engagements in the morning in Moscow and wanted to leave after dinner. I thought Polganov's decision was reasonable; I didn't see how the chauffeurs could follow the "corduroy roads" in the dark. The argument continued, but Polganov was not to be persuaded; we would not leave until daylight. There was no place for us to sleep in the camp, so we said good-bye to the officers and tried to find our way through the woods to the cars. It was pitch dark, and we had to cross a brook on a log that was difficult to walk on even in daytime. I was navigating it cautiously when I heard an English correspondent behind me shout,

"Damn it! I'm slipping!"

He fell into the brook, making a great splash, and, although it was not deep, he was wet all over. The boys thought it was funny; they cheered him loudly, and he complained,

"If it was the middle of winter, and I fell in ice water, you'd still laugh."

They agreed they would, and he dripped along the path, muttering to himself.

We had just settled in the cars to sleep for a few hours when we were suddenly awakened by one of the Red Army officers. He was very disturbed. He said he had given a map of the region to a newspaperman, and it had not been returned. It was a staff map, and he had to have it back. A correspondent got out of the limousine next to us and handed it to him.

"You gave the map to me this afternoon, and I forgot about it," he said. "I'm sorry you had to come down here after it."

The officer rolled it under his arm and thanked him; his relief was obvious. I was glad the map had been recovered so quickly; there undoubtedly would have been trouble if it had not been

found. I didn't know if the correspondent had kept it intentionally; maps were very scarce, and we needed them in our work. Moscow stores seldom had them; they were bought almost as soon as they were printed. The officer again said good-bye to us; his manner was affable, and he seemed to bear no resentment for his trouble.

It was getting light, so Polganov decided there was enough visibility to begin the trip home.

Heavily loaded trucks occasionally passed us on the road as we drove slowly through the forest. The drivers were extremely careful, but, in spite of this, the leading Ziss was soon stuck in the mud. We tried to push it, but the wheels sank deeper, and we finally got some fence posts and used them as a lever to raise the car while we put planks under the tires. There were so many people helping the chauffeur at once that I stepped out of the way and lighted a cigarette; I have never been good in competitions of this nature. Others, also feeling the work was too crowded, retired, leaving the supervision to an American newspaperman.

"That's better," he said. "We don't want to be here all night. I know how to do it."

And, to give him credit, he did know how to do it. He took a fence post, using it as a lever on another plank which he directed the chauffeur to hold in place. The car was coming out of the mud; it looked as if we would soon be on our way again. And then, without warning, the chauffeur had another idea and suddenly let go of the plank. His action released the fence post and threw the newspaperman off balance. He stumbled, and the fence post came down on his head, knocking him unconscious. We helped him up; he gradually recovered his senses, although he was a little dazed. He glared at the chauffeur and said,

"The man is a murderer."

Then he walked off, mumbling "to hell with it" when some

one mentioned the car. While we were again struggling in the mud with the posts, a soldier driving a tractor came by and offered to pull us out. He had a drag-chain, and he towed us as far as the "corduroy road." He unhitched the tractor and turned around. When we thanked him he said,

"A Ziss is no good for the front; you should use a jeep next time."

The Red Army had received several shiploads of jeeps from America and had retained the nickname given the little cars by United States troops. We had seen many of them near Rzhev, along with tanks and American trucks.

"I now believe all I have read about the mud that Napoleon's troops had to crawl through," said a correspondent.

"The French had a worse time in Poland than they did in Russia," added another newspaperman. "The mud down there was so deep that frequently men and horses were drowned in it. Napoleon travelled in a carriage drawn by six horses, yet he wrote that he was mired fast several times in the Pripet marshes."

"What did you think of the trip?" Aneuroff asked me.

"It was interesting, but it was too short to learn much," I said. "I'd like to stay up at the front for about a month."

"But what was your main impression from what you saw?" he asked.

"I think the keenness and enthusiasm of the officers and men was the most surprising feature. I expected them to look worn and tired, but they appear ready to begin another offensive."

"Don't forget they've just had a victory," said a newspaperman; "there's nothing like winning to help the army's morale."

"It isn't only that," said Aneuroff; "I think the spirit at the front is usually a little better than civilian morale."

It was about mid-morning when we arrived at the Metropole Hotel. Oscar was working in my room, and I took a bath and

shaved before writing my story. He asked about conditions at Rzhev, and I gave him an account of what I had seen.

"I feel more confident now than I did before the trip," I said.

"That's what everybody says when they come back from the front," Oscar commented. "It's a general reaction. I think it's remarkable that the soldiers are in such good spirits."

"Yes," I said, "that's one reason I was so anxious to go to Rzhev. We didn't see as much as I wanted, but I particularly noticed how the men were feeling. I think the morale is good. It wasn't anything they said or did, but the confidence was there."

"Then you think morale is more important than anything else?" he asked.

"Not entirely," I said, "but it seemed the most significant thing for me to watch in such a short visit. I saw guns, and tanks, and mortars, and I saw other equipment; it looked good. They have the arms, and now I'm going to write about the men."

CHAPTER VIII

R Z H E V

THE NEWLY ORGANIZED Anglo-American Press Association was rocked from the beginning by a quarrel which almost ended in its dissolution. It was one of those childish affairs in which the participants themselves recognized they were acting foolishly but yet could not reach an agreement. The argument concerned whether or not the Russian secretaries should eat with the correspondents in the small private dining-room that had been provided for our use. Since the war, the secretaries had been living at the hotel and eating with the newspapermen. Many of the correspondents complained of this; they said they worked all day with their secretaries and would like to be away from them at least during meals. The other reason, which was not stated, was that the presence of the secretaries dampened the discussion at the table; the reporters did not feel completely free to talk when their assistants were listening. It is doubtful if the secretaries would have willingly reported to the authorities the newspapermen's occasional critical comments, but they were Soviet citizens, and it placed them in an unfair position to have to listen to the table conversation. It was unfair because if an American or British newspaperman made an indiscreet remark which somehow came to the ears of the government, the secretaries would be under suspicion for not reporting it themselves.

This, then, was the situation when the president of the correspondents' association, acting upon the advice of several newspapermen, went to the manager of the hotel and requested that

the correspondents and secretaries eat separately. The manager agreed, and arranged for the employees to have a special table in the main dining-room; it would be large enough to accommodate the secretaries, and also the messengers who had been dining with the correspondents.

An unforeseen complication arose when the secretaries discovered the food served in the main dining-room was not quite as good as that served the correspondents. They had been content with the change and had even favored it, but they were dissatisfied with inferior food. It was in vain to point out that factory commissars and army officers ate in the same restaurant, that they were eating better than were ninety per cent of the other Russian civilians; they demanded to have the same menu as the correspondents.

The fact that the correspondents were given slightly better food was not a situation created by the newspapermen. They had not asked for it. The differences in rationing was part of the Soviet system; members of the Foreign Office, for example, had their private dining-room and ate much better than factory workers. No such inequality existed under the English wartime regulations, and incoming newspapermen were constantly surprised that it should be so in Russia.

The hotel director had orders to favor the newspapermen, but he had long been dissatisfied that the Russian secretaries and messengers benefited equally. He took advantage of the correspondents' desire to eat in private to introduce separate menus. The press association had not planned that the secretaries should be served different food when the separation was requested, and the situation became a problem. We had unwittingly committed an injustice; Russian secretaries and messengers had been willing to take the risk of working for us because of the advantages, such as food and foreign clothing. In wartime, this was especially true

when even rationed commodities were not available; being allowed to eat at the Metropole was a priceless privilege. Few people were given a card of admittance to the hotel dining-room. But, at best, it was not sufficient compensation to Russians for the social ostracism that followed working for foreigners. A girl who gives up her chastity has not taken a more final step than a Russian who once seeks the employ of foreigners. There is no turning back; it is always on the record. Britain and America were allies of the Soviet Union, but no one could look to the years ahead. There was a real risk, and we felt our employees should be compensated as much as possible.

Many of the newspapermen, however, had not been consulted when the association asked the management to make the change. These correspondents listened to their secretaries complain about the inferior food, and they concluded that it was unfair to the Russian employees. They were angry and demanded to know why the association had acted without a vote being taken.

Feelings became so bitter that it was impossible to explain what had happened; that the hotel management was responsible for giving the secretaries poorer food, not the correspondents' association. Then the charge of snobbism was hurled; who had been unwilling to eat with the secretaries in the first place?

It was finally decided to have a meeting of the association to discuss the question and decide whether the secretaries should return to our dining-room.

There were hurried conferences in rooms before the correspondents met in full session; it was generally thought that opinion was about equally divided. Of the group who wanted them back, A. T. Cholerton, the veteran British newspaperman, was the most vocal. The opposition, however, had found a spokesman, an American lecturer who knew Russia well, and who professed to be shocked that the secretaries would ask for better food

when millions of their countrymen had little to eat. He had the added advantage of having been a prominent Soviet sympathizer for years, so he wouldn't be suspected of bias.

The opposition arrived at the meeting, clutching their lecturer-recruit, and shepherded him to a seat in the front row. They decided not to let him speak immediately but to save him for the last when he would be useful to sway the doubtful. This turned out to be an error in strategy. Another mistake they made was demanding that two new members be given the right to vote; it was thought they would cast their ballot against the secretaries returning to the newspapermen's dining-room, but they sided with Cholerton. The latter had no tricks such as high-powered speakers or enfranchizing new correspondents, but he acquired a following by the force of his indignation.

The debate began when a correspondent said he regretted the inequality of rationing; he would be in favor of everybody receiving the same food, but that was purely a Soviet matter. The correspondents, after all, were the guests of the country; they didn't make the laws nor create the customs. He recalled that the secretaries had not shared a table with the correspondents during the winter they had spent at the Grand Hotel in Kuybyshev. It was a question of preference, but it was also to the interest of the correspondents and their assistants to be separated. He was sure that some of the secretaries welcomed it. The correspondent of a New York paper interrupted.

"My secretary told me frankly she considers the new arrangement better. She doesn't like eating three meals a day with us."

The speaker continued by asserting that those who had favored having meals in privacy had not intended there would be any difference in food. The hotel management had decided that. He thought the argument could be ended by the association voting to

request the dining-room superintendent to give the secretaries the same rations as the correspondents.

"That, in the final analysis, is the nub of the matter," he said. "No newspaperman wants better food, and especially not in this country. I do like privacy. Meals are about the only opportunity we have of getting together, and we ought to be able to talk without restraint."

A correspondent disagreed; he said the newspapermen showed a lack of understanding of their responsibilities. Almost every worker in Russia, he pointed out, belonged to a trade union which protected their interests. The secretaries did not belong to a trade union, and therefore looked to us to help them; it was a paternalistic arrangement which had always been understood and accepted.

"The blunt truth is that they have nobody but us," he argued. "They are like children, spoiled children you may say, but we have to take care of them. This question of food is trivial; they have enough to eat, more than most people, but the terrible scarcity everywhere has given the subject importance. They are afraid of anything that would lessen their rations."

"That's it exactly," said a British newspaperman, "and that's why I'm going to vote they come back to our table. My staff has been thinking about it and talking about it so much during the past two days that it has interfered with the work."

The opposition bloc saw that the trend was going against them, so they decided it was time to let their star-lecturer talk. He took the floor, pointing out that he had long been a friend of the Soviet Union, that he was immeasurably shocked at the question of food being discussed while Russia was fighting for its life, and that he saw no reason why the newspapermen should not eat in privacy.

"Snob!" cried a heckler.

The lecturer gasped, he looked as if he had been struck.

"What! Me a snob!" he whispered.

The memory of years on the public platform when he had been called everything from a bolshevik to a fellow-traveller passed swimmingly before his eyes. He turned to his supporters.

"I can't do it," he said. "I'm going to vote that the secretaries come back to our table."

He sat down weakly, muttering.

"I've been with the working-man all my life, and to think that I should be called a snob! Me!"

The heckler looked surprised and pleased, and one of the opposition bloc said,

"There goes the old ball-game."

A vote was taken; an overwhelming majority wanted the secretaries to return to our dining-room. A committee was appointed to inform the manager of the hotel of our decision, and we decided to notify him at once. He listened impassively and then said,

"I am sorry, gentlemen; the matter is out of your hands. I was going to make the change in any case. The arrival of several new correspondents recently has strained our facilities so that something had to be done. You realize that each newspaperman has a secretary and a messenger. There were too many in the small dining-room."

We asked him if the secretaries could have the same food as the correspondents.

"Yes," he said, "but they will have to agree not to take packages home with them. We simply do not have enough."

That was the end of the affair. But, more than anything else, the secretaries' alarm had revealed the preoccupation with food that accompanied scarcity. People were haunted by the fear that the time was coming when they would be hungry. Men and women who had been indifferent about their meals took an increasing interest in the table. I discussed it with a correspondent

who had spent three months in an enemy internment camp, and he told me he had seen hunger in its advanced stages.

"Our rations were so limited that we were always hungry," he said. "We couldn't think of anything except food. People who had formerly led respectable lives did despicable things for half a loaf of bread; they would beg or steal, or pawn anything for a chance to eat."

There was no famine in Moscow, but the rationing system was tight; although people were not hungry, they were conscious that they were living close to their minimum needs. They were acutely sensitive to anything involving a change in their food allowance. The argument over eating with the secretaries had an interesting sidelight; it marked a division among the correspondents. The debate had not been between British and Americans or between liberals and conservatives; both were to be found in each camp.

It was the same during the purge of 1937; many correspondents, concerned about the arrests of their employees and secretaries, became heart-sick at cabling wholesale liquidations day after day. But I remember one famous newspaperman carefully balancing his whiskey and soda in his right hand and delivering himself of the statement, "You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs." The phrase was often quoted by other people, but I first heard it from him; the trouble with it, and with similar glib slogans, was its facile unreality, plausible until you or your friends were the eggs that had to be broken.

I have known members of the Communist party and have talked with people of all nationalities who were in sympathy with the movement. They invariably felt that their work for the "cause" was more important than helping individuals.

"We will eliminate the root of the trouble and destroy poverty and unemployment if we kill the cancerous growth of capitalism," they pontificated, in their familiar dialect.

Lenin was the first to realize Communism in the abstract was too remote an ideal to be fully understood by the masses. Although himself an intellectual with a razor-sharp brain, he mixed with soldiers and workers and joked with them; he appreciated the human equation better than any of his followers have ever done. Many stories were told about him, but I have never heard any light anecdotes, true or false, concerning his successors. It was said about Lenin, for example, that he once saved the life of a lady who was a Soviet diplomat. She had written a book about free love and was responsible for the bolsheviks receiving unfavorable comment on their morals throughout the world. This made the commissars angry because free love had never been part of the Soviet program; it was the lady's own idea. Unfortunately for her, she was already in disfavor for a political crime committed before the book was published, so the commissars met and sentenced her to death on the original charge. Lenin arrived late at the meeting, and they told him what they had done. He said, according to the legend,

"You sentenced her to death? That is too easy a punishment for her. There must be something worse."

He seemed to think a few moments, then exclaimed,

"I have it. Who is her present husband? She changes so often that I do not remember. Whoever he is, we will sentence her to live with him for the next five years. That should be a punishment worse than death for her."

The commissars laughed and agreed to the sentence; the free-love advocate lived with her husband for five years, then was sent abroad as minister to a neighboring country. The story, told by the Russians about Lenin, gave a clue to his character. They respected Stalin, but they did not tell anecdotes about him; he was a symbol more than a personality.

The dining-room controversy was gradually forgotten amidst the interest excited among the correspondents by the arrival of an American air mission. The group was headed by Lieut.-Gen. Follett Bradley, former commander at Mitchel Field, an able, serious-minded officer. There was little we could cable about the mission's activities, but it was pleasant to see new faces and hear what was happening at home. Lieutenant-General Bradley had brought a bundle of newspapers with him from Washington; they were only two weeks old and were read eagerly. They were the first American newspapers most of us had seen for many months. The general held a press conference at our request, most of which was off-the-record discussion about the possibility of a second front.

As each new retreat of the Red Army was announced, the Russians became more impatient for an Allied invasion of Europe. Molotov's statement that the formation of a second front in 1942 had been agreed upon brought new hope to millions who were disheartened. July had been a bitter month of defeat and heavy casualties; everywhere people asked when the "novy front" would be established. They knew help was desperately needed, and they believed an Anglo-American diversion would cause the Germans to withdraw troops from Russia, giving the Red Army a breathing spell. The correspondents asked Lieutenant-General Bradley if he thought Washington was thoroughly aware of the situation. He said emphatically that it was not lack of appreciation of the Soviets' peril that was delaying Allied military action. There were other factors, he asserted, which he could not reveal. His conference was largely devoted to answering questions by newspapermen who were convinced Britain and America would invade Europe at any cost if the people only knew how much Russia needed aid. The danger of hesitating, they said, was that Russia might be

knocked out of the war, and then it would take years to beat Germany on the continent. A typical query, directed at Lieutenant-General Bradley was,

“Do they realize we will have lost the war if the Germans cross the Volga?”

Some of these newspapermen were allowed a good deal of latitude by their editors in what they wrote, and they used this freedom to plead for a second front; they were sincere and honestly believed such crusading was justified. News agencies such as the INS, AP, and UP, did not allow reporters to inject personal opinion into their stories, but a factual account of what was happening was sufficiently significant without editorializing. The Russian people and the Red Army had been told that a second front was promised, and they were disappointed that it had not materialized. As the days and weeks of hardships and suffering passed without signs of Allied intervention, the resentment increased and they began to feel let-down. This was natural because the Soviet press printed little about either the British or American war effort. The people were not informed of the heavy losses in ship sinkings, which would have had a direct effect on a planned invasion of Europe, and they were not aware of the great volume of war supplies that were being sent to Russia. They knew aid was being received, but they had no concept of the amount. The constant British bombing of Germany was seldom mentioned, although outstanding raids such as the 1,000-plane attack on Cologne were briefly noted.

I did not think the Soviet press should publish an apologia for the Allied failure to invade the continent, but the ignoring of American and British problems seemed destined only to create bad feeling among the Russian people towards us. It could be said they were so busy fighting their own war that they had no time for explanations, but, whatever the reason for their silence,

the people were left to believe their allies had made a promise which they were not keeping.

The newspapermen themselves were confused about the issue, and we decided to ask the American Ambassador, Admiral Standley, to hold a press conference to discuss the question. The admiral readily agreed. He was willing, he declared, to be quoted for publication on anything he said; nothing would be off-the-record. He began the conference by referring to the Molotov announcement of "an agreement to form a second front in Europe in 1942." He was asked if the Washington version of this announcement had not stated "an agreement on the desirability of forming a second front," but the ambassador pointed out that in either case an agreement was not a promise. It meant that the contracting parties would carry out something if they were able to do so. This was important as the first official pronouncement of the American view; there was obviously a disparity of interpretation between Moscow and Washington. But, if this was the American attitude, it was a clear hint there would not be a second front in 1942.

I believe Admiral Standley was at some disadvantage in presenting his point of view as hinging upon the difference between an "agreement" and a "promise." He was probably aware of all that had happened and would have liked to tell us, but he had to be content with saying "there was no promise to form a second front in 1942." Diplomatic etiquette prevented him from saying more. The agreement, as he made clear, was "we think it is necessary and desirable, and we will if we can."

The extent to which a few of the newspapermen carried their zeal for a second front was revealed at a luncheon given the foreign correspondents by the Tass agency. There were several Russians present, and, during the course of a speech, one American said,

"I promise you there will be a second front. I don't know when, but I hope soon."

The reporter had no more information than the rest of us; he was reasonably certain there would eventually be a second front, but he was not in a position to promise one. Among the Russians present whom he was reassuring was a member of the Politburo, Stalin's inner cabinet, and a former ambassador to Washington. But we all had to tell our Soviet friends more or less the same thing; foreigners were always questioned about the prospects of an Allied invasion of Europe. It was a subject understandably vital to every Soviet citizen; I used to answer that I believed there would be a second front.

"This year?" they would ask hopefully.

"I don't know," I would reply. "I don't know when."

And then their faces would fall. It was a matter of life and death with them; if a correspondent answered originally that he didn't know, they would ask,

"Well, what do you think?"

And the questions would be repeated over again. I sympathized strongly with the Russians, but I didn't agree with some of our crusading newspapermen. One of them asked me to read a thousand-word cable he had written urging an immediate second front. I looked at it, and he said,

"Do you like it?"

"As an editorial, it's fine," I said, "but there isn't any news in it."

"Why do you object to opinions?" he asked. "Did you ever realize that our opinions as foreign correspondents in Moscow have a certain news value?"

"That may be true for you, working for one newspaper," I admitted. "The subscribers have been reading your stuff for years, and they probably like to know what you think. I have to stick to straight news with an agency, but I like it better."

"Why?" he asked.

"Well, there are a lot of reasons," I said, "but take these second front articles you are writing. You will probably get a lot of people at home stirred up with them. But we are completely cut off from the outside world here; we don't know what is happening in London or Washington. There may be good and valid reasons why they don't invade Europe at this time."

"I want to tell the people what's at stake," he exclaimed. "I want them to know Russia is in danger, and that if she collapses we may lose the war."

"That's told every day in straight news stories," I said. "The people know that, and the Allied General Staffs know it. I believe they would invade the continent tomorrow if they were able."

He laughed.

"I guess we'll never agree," he said, "but tell me one thing: would you read my articles if you were at home and happened to see them in the paper?"

"Yes, I would," I said, "because you can be a good newspaperman when you want to be, but, after I read that stuff, I'd say, 'he's at it again, writing editorials.'"

The press department had invited the correspondents to the opening of a new Soviet film, and most of us accepted because it was a costume piece laid in the 14th century: a type of production the Russians did well. But, although the outdoor battle scenes were excellent, the acting was stilted and the plot weak, so we left before it was over. I was usually disappointed in Soviet films, but I went hopefully to the cinema every now and then because of a movie I had seen in 1938 on the life of Peter the Great. It was one of the finest screen performances I had ever witnessed, and I never forgot it. I was astonished that it was so far above any other Soviet film I had seen until I discovered the reason. Stalin himself had ordered Peter's life to be filmed; he wanted it to be faithful to

history in every detail as far as possible. The best technicians and the best actors and directors were assigned to the work; and they made a great picture. It was thus by accident I learned of Stalin's deep admiration for Peter the Great, the Czar who most appeals to the bolsheviks.

Peter was pictured as a man of the people, the builder of Petrograd, now Leningrad; a foreseeing but rough soldier, who would wrestle with any of his men, and steal their mistresses if they attracted him. Stalin, while not ascetic, leads a quiet life and drinks only a little Georgian wine; it was obvious that Peter the Builder, the Czar who had westernized Russia, interested him. Without doubt, no two men have brought more changes to the country in the last four hundred years than Peter and Stalin. Lenin accomplished the revolution, but he died too soon to see his program more than started. Stalin, with the same ruthlessness that characterized Peter, developed the work and forced a social revolution upon one-sixth of the world in less than twenty years. And, then, like Peter, he led the country in war, a struggle that seemed destined to be recorded as the most successful struggle in Russian history. The parallel is interesting, but more intriguing is the fact that Stalin is well aware of the similarity and is pleased when he hears the comparison made.

The amazing story of Joseph Djugashvilli, who trained to be a priest, and whose mother once told H. R. Knickerbocker, "He is a good boy," is more exciting by far than that of Peter the Great. I have heard thousands cheer themselves hoarse at the mere sight of him, and they were not cheering because guards were prodding them. To say that Stalin is the most popular man in Russia would be true, but it would be a half-truth, because he is not thought of as a man or an individual at all; he is as much a symbol as his name: steel.

The mystic quality that sets Stalin apart from other world

leaders cannot be wholly explained by his Asiatic blood. He has a driving force which seems to stem from his belief in himself, the inner conviction that he has a mission to perform; he will tolerate no rivals. If he enjoys the immense power which he wields, he does not show it in any of the obvious ways. He seldom appears in public, he lives simply in a small apartment in the Kremlin, and only recently has he accepted the title of premier. For years he preferred to be known simply as secretary of the Communist party. He is extremely well-read and works fourteen or fifteen hours a day; he knows every department of the vast machinery of government and picks the top men himself. He then holds them responsible for success or failure and expects them to do the same with the men under them.

But, again like Peter, Stalin is a nationalist. The Third International has never interested him except as a political weapon; it has its uses, but he dreams first and foremost of building Russia into a prosperous and powerful country. Some believe it is as far as he envisions in his lifetime; he disliked both Trotsky and his ideas of world revolution because he held them impractical. And he has no time for either impractical people or impractical ideas.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCHILL VISIT

I WAS RETURNING from a walk with two newspapermen one hot afternoon in August when we saw a huge bomber circle over Moscow preparing to make a landing. As it came lower we could see by the markings that it was British; it dipped out of sight near the military airdrome on the outskirts of the city.

"Well, well! We have visitors," said one of the correspondents. "Maybe it's Churchill."

"I don't think it is," remarked another, "but it might be Lord Gort. I've heard rumors that he was coming up from India."

We crossed the street to the National Hotel; there were two British privates standing at attention at the door. This was unusual and indicated that guests of high military rank were expected. The soldiers said they did not know who was coming.

"They never tell us anything. We just get our orders," said one.

We decided to wait at the National, and, while we were standing there, a company of mounted Cossacks rode past and turned the corner up Gorki Street. They were colorfully dressed in black uniforms, high fur hats, and red scarves. The customary small-boy hero-worshippers were following the parade, but suddenly their interest turned to a line of six limousines coming in the opposite direction. They were Kremlin cars, noticeable because of the bullet-proof smoked glass, and uniformed chauffeurs.

Churchill and Molotov could be seen sitting in the back seat of the first car, and, as the others passed, we identified Averell Harri- man and members of the British General Staff. This was big news, and we raced to the censorship office to send urgent cables. Even

as we were running we realized that probably nothing would be released until Churchill had left Moscow and was safely back in London, but we had to make sure. Censorship regulations were seldom predictable, and the only safe course was to write our messages and submit them. The press bureau accepted our telegrams but said they had instructions to stop all news stories concerning the arrival of the mission. They did not know when the ban would be lifted. Leland Stowe told me that Edmund Stevens, the Cairo correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*, had accompanied Harriman as an interpreter. I had known Stevens in Moscow in 1937; he was married to a Russian girl and spoke the language fluently. He and Stowe were old friends; they had been together on the Norwegian, Finnish, and Greek campaigns. Leland said Stevens and Harriman were staying at the government guest house, the former Austrian embassy, so we decided to call on them immediately.

Churchill's arrival was known to only a few people in Moscow, but it had already caused much speculation among the correspondents. The Russian need for a second front was very great; the Germans were streaming across the Don towards Stalingrad and southward through the Caucasus. The British prime minister had arrived at a momentous hour, when the sands of Allied fortunes seemed to be running low.

"Churchill has come to see Stalin for one of three reasons," guessed a correspondent. "First, to explain to him why it is impossible to form a second front in 1942, in which case Winston is in for an uncomfortable time; or secondly, to tell him there will be an immediate European invasion, and to plan joint action; or third, to suggest the postponement of a second front in favor of an alternative plan."

"Yes," agreed another newspaperman, "those are about the only three possibilities, but the Russians won't want to hear anything

except a plan for invasion. They want a second front, and they want it now."

"You have to hand it to Churchill," some one commented. "I never expected to see an old conservative like him in Moscow, but it's the only way to clear the air. This will straighten out the misunderstandings if anything can."

We met Ed Stevens in the main hall at the guest house, and Stowe and I talked with him while waiting for Harriman. Stevens, looking thin from a recent campaign in Ethiopia, said he had joined the mission in Cairo; there was not much happening in the Middle East at the time, he declared, and he had welcomed the chance to come to Moscow. He had been given a leave of absence by his newspaper to act as interpreter, but he was not writing any articles from Russia. Harriman came in, and Stevens introduced him to the correspondents. Several of the newspapermen who had worked in London knew him already; I had met him when he first came abroad as Lease-Lend Expediter. He had a reputation as a hard worker and was liked by the press for his directness in handling questions.

"This is primarily Churchill's party," said Harriman. "The American government is completely informed concerning his intentions and agrees with his views, but I am here more as a Lease-Lend consultant than as a government spokesman. I intend, however, to go to Washington after the conference and report to President Roosevelt."

"Where is Churchill staying while he is here?" asked a newsman.

"He is at a private house outside the city. He has an appointment with Stalin tonight, and there are other meetings scheduled for tomorrow with a dinner in the Kremlin in the evening."

"Did the mission come here to discuss the second front?" several asked.

"Some of you have been at my conferences before and know I don't stall," replied Harriman. "I can't discuss the purpose of the conversations. I would repeat that this is primarily Churchill's mission."

Waiters brought in sandwiches and vodka, and Harriman talked with us informally for more than an hour. He bluntly refused to say anything further on Churchill; I gathered Harriman had been drafted to accompany the Prime Minister at the last minute. It was probably felt that American representation would strengthen the appearance of the delegation, as the inclusion of General Maxwell, the American chief of supply in the Middle East, also indicated. Although Harriman and Maxwell were able men, the United States would have sent a stronger representation if it had been originally planned that America should be represented.

The Americans were a minority on the mission, and this was a mistake. The Russians expected that if the United States were represented at the conference they would at least send a delegation equal to the British. The Soviets regarded America as a bigger, wealthier, and more powerful country than Great Britain. They were anxious for American good-will. They felt Britain was fighting for her life, and they cared less about her friendship. It was neither a cynical nor opportunistic attitude; they knew Britain could not help them much without American aid, and, sensitive to a hair's degree in international relationships, they knew America was not adequately represented. Britain had her Prime Minister and her entire General Staff; America had an able volunteer executive and an equally able supply General, but neither, as the Soviets knew well, was powerful enough in Washington to speak for Congress and the White House.

Averell Harriman must have realized this, but, faithful and hardworking as he has always been, he went to Moscow when he

was requested to do so, without complaining. He had not had time to receive detailed instructions from Washington, so, at the Moscow airport, he contented himself with saying for the news-reels,

“America stands one hundred per cent behind what Winston Churchill has come here to do.”

There was nothing wrong with Harriman announcing that America backed Winston Churchill; it was completely true. But it was psychologically wrong for the United States in her dealings with the Soviet Union to imply that any other nation was acting as our spokesman. The Russians were the ultimate realists in international relations; they believed that, on the European continent, Germany was the most powerful nation, Italy did not count; that, in Asia, Japan was the dominant power; and, that in North and South America, the United States was the court of last appeal. They believed that Great Britain, as a sea-power, needed to be allied with any of these three nations for her voice to be heard. And, finally, they understood thoroughly their position as the balancing land force between Europe and Asia. The Kremlin knew that Winston Churchill had come to Russia for a definite reason, that, as a second thought, he had asked Averell Harriman and General Maxwell to accompany his mission in order that the weight of the Stars and Stripes might be felt along with the Union Jack, but they did not feel Washington was truly represented. Harriman understood the circumstances; he knew that no American except President Roosevelt could outweigh the veteran Churchill in international conferences. The correspondents, although still forbidden to cable about the meeting, were quick to see the situation.

One remarked,

“If Churchill hasn’t come here to discuss a second front in 1942,

the conference will go to hell soon. Stalin will be angry, and Churchill is too proud a man to apologize for anything he thinks is right. If Cordell Hull or another member of the cabinet had come, the Soviets would listen."

The correspondent had hit upon the difficulty; Churchill knew Britain and America had done all they could, that it was physically impossible to invade Europe at the time. But both he and Stalin were men of rugged tempers, neither temporized with what he believed, and they were incapable of self-explanations. Churchill had come from an England which had been bombed and bled white, whose sons were all in the army or in Japanese or German prison camps; Stalin spoke as the leader of a people who were straining with the supreme effort of all-out war. They were in no mood to accept reproaches from each other. Churchill might have reproached Stalin for refusing to appreciate the extent of the British war effort, a blind unwillingness to acknowledge that Britain was fighting as hard as Russia for German defeat. Stalin, on the other hand, might say to Churchill that few people could speak of sacrifices after they had seen Russia. It was an angry impasse that might have been resolved by a man like Cordell Hull, whom both of the protagonists could respect, and who spoke with the true voice of the most powerful Allied nation. But Cordell Hull was not there, and neither Stalin nor Churchill would call upon Averell Harriman as an arbiter.

The next day passed in hurried conferences; the attachés who knew what was going on feared lest by a look or a mannerism they would betray the secret, and they adopted a manner of hollow joviality with newspapermen. The British diplomat was seldom at his best when dealing with American newspapermen, although the efficiency of the Foreign Office press department in London has led many a correspondent to expect the same of British diplo-

mats abroad. They change when they leave England, as do our fledglings from the State Department when they leave Washington.

But the cat was out of the bag that night; Churchill went to the Kremlin dinner dressed in zipper overalls, his famous siren suit. The dinner was formal; servicemen wore their medals, diplomats wore their decorations, but Winston wore his overalls. No nation in the world is as sensitive to the dictates of diplomatic protocol as the Soviet Union. They probably would have forgiven Churchill not wearing a white tie because of his long trip, and a dark suit would have passed muster, but overalls! If the British Prime Minister thought that, because he was in the land of the proletariat, working clothes were indicated, he was wrong. There was a sharp intake of breath when he appeared; it was a deadly shock. They had seen pictures of him wearing the siren suit at the White House, but they did not expect the costume at a formal banquet. The inference that Russians wore overalls to dinner could not be overlooked on the grounds that the costume was technically an air-raid suit; no sirens had sounded in Moscow for five months; no raids were likely. And if it became necessary to go to a shelter, the Kremlin underground was the most luxurious in the world.

The zipper overalls were not in themselves important; it was wartime, and Churchill was known to enjoy working in them. If the conference had been going smoothly, if the British leader and Stalin had been discussing the immediate opening of a second front, the siren suit would have been almost appropriate. Such informality would have been overlooked amidst toasts to the coming victory. But this had not been the case; the conversations had been strained, and trivial incidents became important. The Prime Minister was not a gay figure at the banquet; he did not appear happy. The British ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr,

did what he could to ease the situation. He made a witty speech and seemed to be having a good time, but even the polished Kerr was forced to draw his napkin across his damp brow a few times as though wishing he were back in the glens of his native Scotland. The best speech of the evening was made by the United States Naval Attaché, Captain Jack Duncan, who in a Missouri drawl discussed Allied naval cooperation. Stalin obviously liked Duncan's talk when it was translated to him, and, after the banquet, he crossed the room, took the American officer by the arm and engaged him in conversation. Captain Duncan had been studying Russian daily for several months, but he admitted afterwards he would have worked a little harder if he had known he was going to talk to Stalin. The Soviet leader's interest in an American who was outranked by at least half the British officers present was one of the odd features of a bizarre evening.

The final sessions were held the next day, and it was planned that the Prime Minister would leave in the afternoon. He was scheduled to hold a press conference at the British Embassy after lunch, but he did not appear. Instead, Clark Kerr, the ambassador, embarrassedly explained to the correspondents that Churchill never held press conferences in England, consequently it would be unfair to the London newspapermen for the Premier to receive the press in Moscow. Most of us had formerly worked in London, and we knew it was true; we did not complain, but there was much indignation a week later when it was revealed Churchill had held a press conference in Cairo after leaving Russia. It would have been better not to have made any excuse for not seeing us because, although he said little to the correspondents in Cairo, we felt we had been let down.

The mission's departure was suddenly cancelled, however, and we made great efforts to discover the reason for the delay. Ed Stevens said he had not heard of any change in program, and

Harriman was equally vague; they both thought it must have been due to "bad flying weather." We learned later that Churchill had ordered the postponement, that he had gone alone to the Kremlin to pay one last call on Stalin. The two men were closeted until after midnight, and Churchill left Moscow at about three o'clock in the morning. What happened at that farewell meeting will probably not be known until either of the two men writes his memoirs, but it was generally agreed in Moscow that it was the most important conference of all. There were many conjectures as to whether they parted in agreement or in anger; it was an intriguing question, with so much at stake in the relations between the two men.

There have been many strange meetings in the course of the war, but none more interesting than the Moscow conference of Stalin and Churchill. The Georgian revolutionary and the English aristocrat made a striking contrast: one, the titular leader of the world Communist movement, and the other, the life-long foe of Marxism who would "unsay no word" he had ever uttered against bolshevism. But, underneath these obvious differences, there were certain unexpected similarities in character: both were strong-willed men, intensely nationalistic, and intolerant of opposition; each was well-read and had a deep feeling for the past. Each was guided to some extent by the lessons of history; Kutuzov and Peter the Great meant as much to Stalin as Wellington and Drake did to Churchill. The Englishman was a colorful orator who well understood the use of classical rhetoric, yet the Russian by his simplicity and bluntness achieved as great an effect. Both had tricks of speech: Churchill's orations abounded with metaphors and similes; Stalin heightened the forcefulness of his statements by frequent use of the repeated negative, as, for instance,

"The Red Army, in the first period of the war, *had not yet had*

nor could have had as much experience conducting large-scale military operations as the Hitlerite army.”

But their similarities separated them as much as their differences; it would be untrue to assert that their outlook and background were so far apart they could never understand each other. They understood each other well, and, with the quick perception of each other's character, there was a fundamental personal antagonism. Only powerful common aims, the accidents of history, could bring them together.

Whatever effect the Churchill visit may have had on Anglo-Soviet relations, its immediate result was the straining of the entente between British and American correspondents in Moscow. It was purely a newspaper quarrel, one of the many of its kind which have taken place throughout the world since the war made necessary the simultaneous release of communiqués. On the surface, it would appear, for example, that the publication of an important statement at two o'clock in London would be fair to everybody if it could be released in New York at the same time. But two o'clock in London is nine o'clock in New York, too late for the morning papers and too early for the afternoon papers. By the same token, two o'clock in London is six o'clock in the evening in Moscow, and in Australia it is—but here the censors stop trying to think. The press departments in London, Moscow, and Washington have never been able to satisfy all correspondents concerning the time of release for publication of communiqués. Newspapermen, waving complaining cables from their editors, have stormed the offices of chief censors demanding a revision of time schedules, but any change always works to some one's disadvantage.

Stories on the visit of the British mission were to be released at six o'clock in the evening a few days after Churchill had departed.

The English newspapermen thought of a scheme that most American correspondents admitted afterwards was pretty good, had it worked. They went to their ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, and pointed out that there was five hours' difference in time between London and New York and, therefore, would he request the Soviet Foreign Office to permit British newspapermen to send their dispatches five hours ahead of the Americans.

The English boys were sweetly reasonable; all they wanted, they said, was an "even break." Clark Kerr, busy with his own problems, missed the fallacy in their argument: that it was unimportant about the differences in time since the news would be flashed to New York as soon as it arrived in London. The American reporters in Moscow would be scooped by five hours by their British colleagues. The ambassador readily consented to intercede with the Russian press department; he took up the matter immediately, and the Soviets gave their permission. I have since wondered whether, like Clark Kerr, they were deceived by the scheme's plausibility, or whether they enjoyed the prospect of an Anglo-American argument. I recalled that some years previously a correspondent had been summoned to the Foreign Office and told that a woman had given his name in reference when applying for a visa to visit the Soviet Union. She claimed the correspondent would know her; that, in fact, she had divorced him only two years before. The Foreign Office official asked the newspaperman if the statements were true, and if he would recommend her.

"Yes, she was my wife," admitted the correspondent, "but she's just coming up here to bother me. Don't give her a visa."

The Russians granted the woman a visa within twenty-four hours, and she led the correspondent a dog's life all the time she was in Moscow. The Foreign Office attachés were tremendously amused; it was a standing joke at the press department for many months, a rare and surprising bit of humor.

The British newspapermen kept quiet about their dark secret; they knew what an outcry would be made if we discovered it. But one of them carelessly dropped a hint at dinner, and that was enough; the Americans went to the press department and asked if there had been any change in the release-time of the Churchill story. Polganov admitted the British would be allowed to send their cables five hours ahead of us; he said he had thought we knew about it. There was great indignation; we pointed out that it was a big story, and that it was a manifest injustice to let some send it ahead of others. Polganov said the British ambassador had requested it because of the difference between New York and London time; some of us who knew Clark Kerr realized he had misunderstood the situation, that the English newspapermen had misinformed him. But we quickly chose a delegation to call on the American ambassador, Admiral Standley, to ask him to protect our interests. It was serious; none of us would ever be able to explain being beaten five hours on such a story.

Admiral Standley was sympathetic; he said he would do all that was possible to help us. He would call upon Sir Archibald Clark Kerr immediately and also would contact the Soviet Foreign Office. If necessary, he added, he would send a cable to the White House. There were only a few hours left before the British newspapermen would begin to send their stories; unless they were stopped, we were going to be badly beaten on the news.

While waiting for the result of Admiral Standley's intervention, the Americans gathered at the press department. They were excited, and there were threats of attempting to stop the British correspondents by force from sending their stories. A sidelight of the occasion, which was marked by rising tempers, was that those newspapermen who were least concerned with the outcome were the most vocal in their protests. Only the agency correspondents, INS, AP, and UP, would lose by the five-hour delay; they de-

pended upon speed, but most of the others were representing morning newspapers, and it did not matter to them who sent the story first as long as they met their own midnight deadline. An issue was at stake, however, and they rallied nobly to the cause. Polganov came out of his office and announced he had received instructions that all stories must be held until six o'clock; the British could not send their cables in advance. The change was largely due to the efforts of Admiral Standley.

With the situation cleared up, the common cause which had united American correspondents was gone, and we began to figure ways of beating each other. The cables stamped by the censors would be handed out simultaneously at the release time, but our messengers would then have to run half a mile to the telegraph office. There was only one window receiving telegrams addressed to foreign countries, and consequently the messengers had to wait in line. The words in each cable were counted by the telegraph clerk before the messenger was given a receipt, and it sometimes took several minutes. Speed in arriving at the telegraph office might make an hour's difference in time of delivery in London or New York.

I thought of renting a car, but then I was reminded that there were three traffic lights between the Metropole Hotel and the telegraph office, and the streets were usually crowded at six o'clock. If the lights happened to be against me, or if there was an accident, I would be hopelessly outdistanced. So I decided on a system of relays; my messenger, Anna, recommended two other girls who she declared were fleet of foot. I stationed each at points one-third of the way and hoped for the best. When I returned to the hotel I found the boys worrying because a British correspondent had rented the only two available cars, just to put them out of use. He did not need them himself, having somehow

managed to rent a motorcycle. It was a shock to me when I saw the motorcycle in front of the hotel; they were practically non-existent in Moscow, and I was afraid my relay of messengers could not stand such competition. I met the Englishman in the hall and said,

"Somebody is going to be mad as hell about that motorcycle. I just saw a couple of the boys letting the air out of the tires."

He choked.

"Why, it's my motorcycle. The bastards!"

He ran down the hall, muttering threats. Nobody had touched his motorcycle, but the joke was poor consolation; it looked as though he had solved the speed problem. The time came for release, and there was a mad scramble of messengers through the lobby of the hotel. Venus, the little girl who worked for the AP, was leading the field, and each newspaperman was cheering and encouraging his runner. The British courier dashed out to the sidewalk, leaped on his motorcycle, and was off with fumes streaming from the exhaust.

The traffic light turned against him just as he reached the intersection, and he was forced to stop while the messengers raced down the street. He looked after them disconsolately, and when the green light appeared, we could tell by the roar of the motorcycle that he was going to try to make up for lost time. But he had lost the advantage; the great Churchill sweepstakes, as we called the race, finished with AP and INS almost tied for first place and UP a close third.

Privately we thought the British correspondents had pulled a clever stunt. They had tried to get a five-hour edge on the Americans, and they had almost succeeded. We would have done the same thing to them. Our protests about it being a "low trick" were part of the game; we had to do it in order to prevent them from

beating us. I had little sympathy with the few correspondents who took the affair seriously and charged that it was gravely unethical. I had never found newspaper work anywhere conducted according to a set of rules; when it was a question of being ahead on a story, friendship was a secondary consideration. The profession was highly competitive; it was admittedly desirable to work together when possible, but, in the last analysis, each man was on his own. The only regrettable feature of the case was that Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, a genial and popular Scot, had been misled.

The Churchill visit took place in August and marked the end of Soviet hopes for a second front in 1942. The censors permitted correspondents to write that the conference had not been an unqualified success, but they made no comment in their own press. The Moscow newsreels showed the British prime minister giving the Vee sign, which, incidentally, was unknown in Russia. The newspapers ran pictures of the meeting in the Kremlin, but there was so little enthusiasm that it almost amounted to indifference. Many newspapermen hesitated to draw any conclusion from the information they possessed because they felt too pessimistic; it looked as though Russia would have to fight alone in Europe during the winter. That was a bitter prospect, but there were other implications.

"No matter what happens this winter Russia will fight on," remarked an observer, "but it's the end of the era of planning for a brave, new world with the Soviet Union as a collaborator. The Russians needed a second front desperately this summer, and they didn't get it; they'll never forget that."

"Yes," agreed another. "Two things can happen now: the Soviets will suffer so many defeats that they will have to make peace with Germany, or, possibly, they will wear out the Nazis by themselves. Either way, it will be bad for Anglo-American plans for Europe."

"An Allied invasion of the continent next year will be an anti-climax," said a correspondent. "The Russians will never again hope and pray for it the way they have in the past months. They are writing their own ticket from now on."

I did not agree entirely with these opinions, but there was some truth in them. The Soviets for years had been warning their people about the dangers of "capitalistic encirclement." The British and American intervention in Russia after the revolution had not been forgotten, and the Kremlin had announced the Anglo-Americans had promised to form a second front in Europe in 1942. This had not been done, and it would be folly to underestimate the resulting bitterness. The Russians had been taught from childhood that the English defeated Napoleon only after he had exhausted himself in Russia. It was a parallel constantly in their minds. The newspapers occasionally printed excerpts of speeches delivered in London or Washington outlining plans for the post-war world; these were contrasted with the news from the battlefields and sourly dismissed as premature discussions.

This was the situation when Churchill came to Moscow, and it took courage for him to attempt the mission with so little in his favor. His effort cannot be considered a failure in the light of the salient facts; he knew that a second front would not be possible for several months, and he went to Stalin personally to explain the reasons. It was an unpleasant task, especially difficult for one of his proud temperament. Like many another man who has set out on a peaceful errand, he may have become angered at first because of his cool reception. But, if he did, this passed, and he went back to the Kremlin on the night of his departure and talked for several hours with Stalin. That last talk, about which nothing is known, was probably the most important of all.

The final assessment of the meeting must be left to historians; it cannot be lightly summarized as a success or failure. Church-

ill's motive in travelling to Moscow appears clear: he wanted to convince Stalin of Britain's good faith. Many newspapermen are not convinced that he succeeded in doing so, but they admit that, even if he failed, it was a gallant attempt. He was psychologically unfitted for the rôle of Talleyrand.

CHAPTER X

STALINGRAD

"THE DIRECT CONSEQUENCE of the Battle of Borodino was Napoleon's flight from Moscow, the ruin of the invading army of five hundred thousand men, and the downfall of the Napoleonic rule, on which, for the first time at Borodino, was laid the hand of a foe of stronger spirit."

These words by Tolstoy might be applied to the Battle of Stalingrad; there were, however, certain important differences. The Russians, in a strictly military sense, were defeated at Borodino; the Red Army won a complete victory at Stalingrad. It was their second major victory in a pitched battle with the Germans, the other being on the outskirts of Moscow in 1941; Kutuzov never defeated Napoleon on the battlefield. And finally, it is doubtful if at any time the Czarist Commander wanted to make a stand in front of the Grande Armée; he considered it wiser to withdraw, and fought at Borodino only because of court pressure. This last difference is the most significant; both the battle of Moscow and the battle of Stalingrad were carefully planned climaxes of long-term strategy. Stalin's generals wanted the Nazi lines of supply and communication to be drawn out as far as possible before making a final effort to halt them. The banks of the Volga offered a good place to make a stand since the invaders had the added difficulty of bringing their war material across the Don. It has sometimes been said that Hitler's two greatest mistakes of the war were first, not invading England after Dunkerque, and second, not turning south through the Caucasus

instead of spending his strength on the siege of Stalingrad. Both of these "mistakes" were the result of a desire to protect his flanks.

The Germans could not risk the English Channel while part of France was unsubdued, and, after the French had surrendered, Hitler thought it was too late to invade Britain, that he had lost the opportunity. Again, the Nazis were afraid to drive through the Caucasus towards Baku while a large Russian army remained at Stalingrad ready to cut off their retreat. The Soviets from the beginning regarded the defense of the city as pivotal for the whole southwestern campaign; it was because of this that they fought with such amazing sacrifice and tenacity.

It had been intended to fight a wearing defensive campaign, and the Red Army general staff believed Rostov and the river Don would prove delaying obstacles to the German advance. The sudden fall of Rostov at the end of July upset Russian plans for a slow retreat to the Volga capital. The Nazis captured Rostov with stunning rapidity, and the panzers streamed across the Don as though it were as narrow as the Moscow River. These events forced the Russians to prepare for the battle of Stalingrad at least a month earlier than they had expected. Their defeats had certain salutary effects which contributed to the final victory. Rostov proved once and for all that the old revolutionary generals were a luxury which the Red Army could not afford; Marshal Budyonny had already been removed for his disastrous leadership in defending the Ukraine, Marshal Voroshilov was training recruits in the Urals, and, after Rostov, Marshal Timoshenko was sent to a minor command on the northwestern front.

The revolutionary generals occupied a unique position in the Red Army; they had been so long identified as loyal bolsheviks and pictured as heroes in the school text-books that they could not be easily dismissed. There had to be a reason for their removal;

they were not traitors, they were simply inefficient and incompetent, and that was a charge which the Central Committee hesitated to make against them. It might cast discredit on other "old bolsheviks" in prominent positions, about whose capabilities there was already some suspicion. Another factor, seldom mentioned, was that the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Shaposhnikoff, an exceedingly able man, was not an old revolutionary. He had been a colonel in the Czar's army and had become so disgusted with government corruption under the weak Nicholas that he had sided with the Communists. Lenin and Trotsky needed officers, and they had gladly accepted his services; he was one of the few former monarchists who had survived all the purges. He was not a member of the inner circle, however, and his success contrasted with the failure of the bolshevik marshals. Timoshenko was not publicly denounced, but he was replaced by young General Konstantin Rokossovsky. The latter immediately began to make changes, depriving some of the political commissars of authority, and removing officers whom he regarded as incompetent.

Rokossovsky brought an entire school of young generals with him, most of whom were not yet forty. He placed Lieut.-General Chuikov in charge of the inner defense of Stalingrad, and he gave the mobile tank command to Lieut.-Gen. Vassily Mikhailovich Badanov. As his own chief adviser, he employed Lieut.-Gen. Philip Ivanovich Golikov who had headed a Soviet military mission to Washington in 1941. They were all graduates of the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow, the Soviet West Point, and this was the chance they had been demanding since the war started. Success would vindicate their plea to take politics out of the army, and to give the generals full control. Stalin approved; it was a step he had been hoping to take for several years but he had never dared to do so before the arrival of the

present generation. It has been noted that the new generals were under forty, they came from the working class and had been trained and educated by the Soviets. They had no link with the bourgeois past and no memories of the struggle for power within the Central Committee of the party. They were completely loyal to Stalin and imbued with unquestioning faith in the Soviet system.

In short, they had all the qualities which Marshal Bluecher and Marshal Tukhachevsky had lacked. Both of these men had known Stalin before he rose to power; they could not accept him as infallible, and, moreover, they were personally ambitious. Bluecher, "the red lord of the Far East," was better known to the masses in Siberia, Mongolia, and China than Stalin. The Marshal wielded immense power and was well aware of it; Stalin watched him with a jealous eye, and, in 1938, ordered him to Moscow "for consultation." Had Bluecher not been consumed with his own importance, he would have recognized the danger signs and disobeyed the order. The most prudent act, then, would have been to flee to China, although competent observers believe he might even have been successful in heading his army in revolt and establishing his own Siberian empire. If this were true, and his personal power had actually grown so great, then Bluecher was stupid to have gone to Moscow. His years of power were ended. Bluecher's admirers, however, asserted that the Marshal was conscious of his peril, and that, knowing it, he went to the Kremlin to convince Stalin of his loyalty. He believed that his willingness to leave the protection of his troops would be sufficient proof of his innocence. Whatever his motives in obeying, Marshal Bluecher, his staff, and their wives, went to Moscow on a special train; they were received at the Kremlin, and, after a week of conferences, they started back to Vladivostok. The train was stopped when they had gone less than ninety miles, and they were all arrested.

That was the end of Bluecher; his Far Eastern command was split up so that no successor could again gain such power.

Marshal Tukhachevsky was accused of plotting a "palace revolution"; it was said he had Napoleonic dreams of conquering Europe. He and seven other generals were sentenced to death and executed.

It was because of such men that Stalin trusted only a few of his generals and had not given them complete control of the army. The new officers, exemplified by Rokossovsky, had reached maturity and could take command. If they succeeded, it would be possible to abolish the system of political commissars, since the commissar system had only been instituted in the revolutionary years as a check on the loyalty of the officers. Rokossovsky and his young lieutenants carried out their orders brilliantly, with such success that Stalin removed the political commissars from the Red Army in October. The Battle of Stalingrad was the first major engagement led entirely by graduates of Frunze Academy; it was a glorious fulfillment of a twenty years' dream, the new Russians had come into their own.

The task of preparing the defense of the city was more difficult because the Germans were nearing the Volga sooner than the Red Army had thought possible. Tank and airplane factories which had been moved back to the Urals were not producing sufficient for the needs of all fronts. The Red Air Force had about 3,000 planes, and some of its new fighters and bombers were very good. The TB-7 bomber was considered the largest in the world. It had a wing span of 118 feet and was 85 feet long. (The American Flying Fortress had a 103-foot wing span and was 67 feet long; and Britain's largest, the Avro Lancaster, was 102 feet, 69 feet.) The DB-3F medium bomber used by the Russians was another good plane. Low wing, all metal, carrying a crew of four, it was armed with three .50 caliber machine guns, and had a range of

2,200 miles. It could carry 5,500 pounds of bombs and did better than 300 miles per hour. For the defense of Stalingrad, the Red Army especially wanted Stormovik IL-2 dive-bombers, as this was an excellent weapon against both tanks and supply trucks. A single-engined, single-seater, the Stormovik had 1,300 horsepower, liquid-cooled engine, and a top speed of 365 miles per hour. It was armed with two machine guns and two 32 mm. cannon, and could carry four 250-pound rocket-bombs or one 1,000 pounder on its dive-bombing missions.

Rokossovsky realized the Red Air Force did not have enough fighter planes to give the defenders of Stalingrad much protection from enemy bombers. But, although limited in number, the Russian fighters had performed well; the newest, the YAK-1, had a reported top speed of 400 miles per hour and resembled the Hurricane in appearance. Heavily armored to protect the pilot and gas tanks, it mounted two 20 mm. cannon in the wings and four .55 caliber machine guns, the heaviest known on any fighter plane at that time. By comparison, Germany's newest, the Focke-Wulf 190, carried no air cannon and was thought to be a little slower. The MIG-3 and the I-16 C Ratas had also given good service; the MIG-3 was not fast, but it had a 1,200 horsepower engine, and carried two 20 mm. wing cannon and four machine guns. The Rata resembled the U. S. Army's Republic Thunderbolt, although smaller and slower, and was armed with two 20 mm. cannon and four .50 caliber machine guns. An improved version of the Chato fighter of the Spanish Civil War days was still being used as a combination fighter and dive-bomber, but it was not popular with Soviet pilots because of its vulnerability. A stubby biplane, it could carry a 1,000-pound bomb under its fuselage and several 50-pounders in wing racks. After it had dropped its bombs it became a fighter, and was equipped for this purpose with two .55 mm. cannon and two .30 caliber

machine guns; the model used in Spain had a speed of 280 miles per hour. The war in Spain was largely used by the Russians as a testing ground for their "storm aviation"—low-flying planes employed to strafe and bomb the enemy's supply lines, tanks, and mechanized equipment.

Lieut.-Gen. Vassily Badanov did not have sufficient tanks to halt the Germans on the approaches to Stalingrad; he and Lieutenant-General Chuikov decided not to risk a full-scale engagement, but to keep a number of machines in reserve so they would always be able to start a limited offensive whenever a diversion was needed. These tactics succeeded; even in the desperate days when the Russians were barely hanging on to the banks of the river, they never remained entirely on the defensive, but, after hours of bombing, almost stupefied from smoke and concussion, they would charge the Nazis and regain a few feet of ground. Rokossovsky's strategy was to hold Stalingrad until the relief army being formed at Saratov was ready to launch its attack upon the Nazi flanks. The Germans wanted to capture the city so they could control an unbroken line from Voronezh on the Don to the Volga and the Caspian Sea. They could then strike northward towards Kuibyshev and Gorki, encircling Moscow; or they could safely continue their penetration of the Caucasus. Badanov's tank tactics were so successful that he was awarded the Order of Suvorov; even the Germans admitted that men and machines were seldom used as economically and effectively. The Order of Suvorov, incidentally, was a new decoration created for commanders; it was particularly appropriate in view of Suvorov's record for not being wasteful with the lives of his men. Significantly, the honoring of the memory of the Czarist general was another indication of the Soviet trend towards nationalism.

Many of the Moscow newspapers at this time "recalled" that Stalin had captured the city from the Czarist White Russians

during the civil war following the revolution. This was true, and the correspondents thought it would make interesting background provided they were also allowed to add that he was driven out a few days later, but the censors refused to admit that Stalin's army had ever lost the city. The correspondents bought school books, preparing to confront the censors with documentary evidence, and they were surprised to find the school books stated that Stalin had captured Stalingrad and remained in possession. Some of the correspondents were indignant at this "distortion of history," but, while I did not condone the practice, I thought the British and Americans were also capable of padding school history books.

There is, of course, an important difference between slanting history to glorify national figures and deliberately misstating fact, but once the historian has decided to create a certain picture of a leader he often ends by misstating facts. He comes across incidents that do not fit the heroic mold he has decided upon, so he changes the incidents.

It is possible that the history of the Battle of Stalingrad will eventually become as confused as the part Stalin played in the city's capture during the revolution, but there is little that can change the fact that it was an outstanding military siege.

Lieutenant-General Chuikov conducted an epic fight; thousands of Russians died in shell holes fighting to the last. They had the mile-wide Volga behind them, retreat was impossible, and their own officers would have shot them if they tried to surrender. It was savage warfare; the only way of avoiding annihilation was to halt the Germans. Under these circumstances, they fought with desperate fury; the Nazis admitted they had never before encountered such resistance. Only Stalin could have conceived that half a million men in such a position would have the strength of twice that number. A drowning man will clutch at anything; each

soldier at Stalingrad knew his only hope of survival was to kill Germans, there was literally no other choice. The orders were "never surrender," and they realized Rokossovsky would not change the order if every man perished.

Chuikov dug a labyrinth of passages underground. The Germans systematically bombed the city by squares; they hammered each block until nothing was left but smoking ruins. The Red Army then emerged from the cellars and fought in the ruins. On one occasion, a party of Russian snipers stayed in the top floor of a building while the Germans were mining the foundations; the trapped soldiers knew what was happening but could do nothing about it. They kept firing until the dynamite exploded and buried them beneath tons of debris. The Germans and Russians sometimes fought each other at such close quarters that they were bombed by their own planes; there were instances of Nazi and Soviet soldiers leaping into the same holes for shelter and then fighting with pistols or knives while the bombardment continued around them.

The Battle of Stalingrad caught the imagination of the Russian people more than any other engagement of the war. As weeks passed, and the city still held, it came to be a symbol of the whole struggle against the invaders. Workers and peasants were confident the Volga capital would not fall; it was a curious faith, not based on knowledge of the military factors, but simply a deep, unreasoning conviction. I mentioned this in dispatches several times, emphasizing that it was not a reflection of official optimism nor even a reliable indication of the situation, but it was a national phenomenon. I asked several Russian acquaintances what they thought, and the answer invariably was,

"The Germans will never capture Stalingrad."

They could not give me logical reasons for this confidence, and it may have been only patriotism, but I think it was more than

that. The newspapers made no predictions; they declared the city *must* hold, but they did not say it *would* hold. The belief, then, was not officially inspired, it was personal, and it probably had its roots in each Russian's conviction that the war was going to be won. The fight for Stalingrad had become more than a struggle for a key city; it meant winning or losing the war, and the people were expressing their certainty of Russia's ultimate victory. The nation had not reacted to other campaigns with such tense excitement, not even in 1941 when Moscow was in danger, and many Russians openly admitted they had thought then that Moscow would fall. It was interesting, in view of the official silence on the matter, to hear Admiral Standley declare that Stalingrad would not be captured. The ambassador, of course, had talked with Stalin, and we wondered if his views were shared by the Soviet leader. It seemed likely that they were, but, knowing that a counter-attack could not be launched before November, Stalin must have had the same intuitive faith as the workers and peasants during those grim October days.

Three pilots who had been in action on the southwestern front since the end of July came to Moscow, and I interviewed one who held the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner. He received me in his room at the New Moscow hotel; my first impression of him was that I had rarely seen any one who looked so tired and worn. He said he flew a MIG-3 and had shot down fourteen German planes, and added that his companions piloted Stormovik dive-bombers.

"The Stormoviks are the most useful planes at Stalingrad," he said. "They have done good work."

"How do things look to you?" I asked.

"I think we will hold the city, but there isn't much left. Everything has been destroyed."

"Have you enough fighters to give the army protection against bombers?"

"We did at first," he declared, "but now the Germans have one fighter accompanying each bomber they send over. The bombers drop their load while we are engaged with the fighters."

"What type of plane do you need most?" I asked.

"Fighters," he answered. "It is hell to watch the men on the ground being bombed. That is the main trouble at Stalingrad; our men could beat the Germans if they had aerial protection. Besides interceptor duty, we have to accompany our own bombers on daylight raids."

"How are your bombers making out?"

"Very well. We caught twenty-two transport planes on the ground recently just after they had landed; we destroyed eighteen and damaged the rest."

"What happened this summer?" I asked. "Why have the Germans been able to advance so far?"

"Every one thinks according to his profession, and, as a pilot, I believe it was because they had aerial superiority. A tank man might not agree with me, but I am sure the infantry does. Every time the Fritzes made a breakthrough, the bombers came over first and pounded our lines, then the tanks and infantry followed."

The pilot was convinced that the most important function of fighters and bombers was supporting the infantry; he did not regard long-distance bombing of cities in enemy territory as very effective.

"Bombing of Germany would be futile until we attain aerial superiority on every single front," he said. "A railroad bridge or a factory can be quickly repaired, and the soldiers on the ground are the only ones who can win the war."

"What do you think of the British bombing of occupied territory?"

He shrugged.

"I would rather see them using their planes to support a second front. I suppose it helps, even though it is not enough."

"Do you think the raids are effective?" I asked.

"Certainly," he replied, "but I do not believe it is worth the cost in men and planes. The British should know from their own experience that bombing of cities and factories is not decisive. One bomb on a front-line trench is worth two in the center of Berlin."

"You mean at Stalingrad, for example?"

"Yes. We could drive the Germans back to the Don if we had five hundred more fighters and bombers."

His two companions came into the room; they looked as worn as he did. One, in particular, showed nervous tension, sitting for a few minutes, then getting up and restlessly moving from one place to another. They repeated that Stalingrad would hold.

"We will drive the Germans back because we must," said the nervous pilot.

He spoke quietly, but his remark impressed me. The newspapers, *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Krasnaya Zvezda*, constantly exhorted the army "not one step backward"; it seemed easier said than done. But, to millions of Russians, the phrase "because we must" had the compelling logic of a familiar axiom. The Soviets had said "we must" when introducing collectivization of farms, building railroads, and starting huge projects like the Dneiper dam. It was an unanswerable phrase, and people did not ask "why?" The men at Stalingrad knew the Germans *must* be stopped; therefore, they could be stopped. This habit of accepting a power greater than themselves had no suggestion of Dostoevsky's fatalism, it was a reflex conditioned by centuries of obedience to commands.

I thanked the pilots for the interview and returned to the

Metropole where one of the boys told me Hitler had made a speech promising that Stalingrad would be taken.

"He's crawled out on a limb," the correspondent said, "and I think Stalin is going to cut it off."

"Yes," I said, "it looks that way, but you won't catch Uncle Joe making predictions."

The Berlin speech was an interesting admission of the German people's impatience with the stalemate on the Volga. We in Moscow had been so concerned with the terrible aspects of the siege we had tended to forget that each day of successful resistance was tantamount to a Soviet victory and a German defeat. The winter was approaching, and, for a month and a half, the Nazis had been halted in front of the city. Hitler's promise was an obvious effort to lull unrest at home, and his reassurances must have increased rather than decreased the people's doubts.

The mental suffering of the Russians who had relatives and friends at Stalingrad was great; the newspapers gave a grim and accurate picture of the extent to which the Volga capital had been devastated. They described the systematic bombing which had reduced one building after another to ruins; there were graphic accounts of the savage street battles. No attempt was made to minimize the fact that it was a fight to the death. The men had dug underground passages and deep trenches, and skilled miners reinforced the shelters to withstand 1,000-pound bombs. Lieutenant-General Chuikov's headquarters were burrowed in the side of the river embankment. The Red Army, however, was free from the greatest terror of besieged soldiers: hunger and thirst. Supplies were ferried across the Volga to them at night. The boatmen who performed this vital task were picturesque characters; they made a living in peacetime fishing on the river. War had not greatly affected their lives; they were not afraid of floating mines or bombs, and many of them fished openly in the daytime

after spending the night taking food and ammunition to Stalingrad.

Long before the siege began, Eddy Gilmore interviewed a fisherman at Kuybyshev. He asked him if he knew the "Song of the Volga Boatman."

"Never heard of it," was the answer.

Eddy hummed it for him, but the boatman looked blank. He said he had been going up and down the river for forty years and never heard any one singing it. The famous Volga chant seemed as unknown on the river as some alleged darky songs were on the Mississippi.

The unexpected offensive character of Russian resistance repeatedly baffled the Nazis. Soviet guardsmen made constant forays against the enemy flanks to the north and south of Stalingrad; they captured prisoners and killed sentries. Sharpshooters lurked in the ruins of buildings, and Red Army mortars and artillery forced the Germans to dig shelters as deep as those held by the defenders. Yards of territory were captured and lost and recaptured; it was static warfare only in the sense that gains were limited. The Russians were perilously close to the river, they could not afford to give up a foot of the remnant of the city left to them. Thousands of men were killed during the two months in battles for the possession of a single street. Chuikov's tactics of active defense were said by observers to be based on soundest principles, but they were difficult to apply; the great temptation of a besieged army is to leave the initiative with the attackers. The Soviets were never able to launch offensives equal to those of the Germans because they lacked the men and material, so they exhausted the enemy with series of lightning thrusts. The Russian task was complicated also in that the defense of Stalingrad had begun at the end of a long retreat with resulting damage to morale. At the end of August, they had lost every battle of the

summer, and the memories of the victories of the previous winter were remote. Cossacks were fighting a rear-guard action for the retreating Caucasian army which again and again attempted to make a stand like the one at Stalingrad but failed, finally losing the Maikop oil fields.

Although the Germans had not attained their objective, they had cut off the Caucasus as a supply route, and the flow of Anglo-American war materials coming through Persia had to be sent around the eastern side of the Caspian. The interior railroads were already overburdened, and loss of the Stalingrad trunk line was immediately felt. The delay in supplies interfered with preparations for the relief of the Volga capital; Stalin was unwilling to risk a counter-attack before the Saratov army was thoroughly equipped. The Nazis, by reaching Stalingrad so quickly, had blocked the supply line of American trucks, tanks, and guns from Persia for at least three weeks, the time necessary to transport them on the circuitous rear line. Although the Soviets had given little credit to Allied supplies, the southwestern campaign clearly revealed how much these materials were needed. A large volume of freight had formerly been carried on Volga river boats, and that important artery was now useless. The two main trunk lines, Rostov-Moscow and Sevastopol-Kharkov-Moscow, were largely in Nazi hands. It was this transportation handicap that made it necessary for the defenders of Stalingrad to hold on for more than two months without the aid of a diversion. The Rzhev offensive, started late in August, collapsed early in September, and there were no other major battles on the central or northwestern fronts during the autumn.

The correspondents in Moscow asked several times to be allowed to go to Stalingrad; the answer was always that we could visit the city after the Germans had been driven out. Russian newspapermen and special writers were there, and their articles

were available to us. Many of the Soviet newspapermen were excellent reporters and, within the limits of censorship, they wrote accurately about what they saw, but the material was second-hand, and we were not satisfied. There was also the consideration that Russian correspondents did not handle stories the way American or British reporters would; newspapermen see situations from different "angles." A British reporter, for example, attending a press conference given by Mr. Smith at which thirty or more newspapermen may be present will write, "Mr. Smith today told me, etc." This gives the impression that he was alone with Mr. Smith. The American or Russian reporter will write, "Mr. Smith today stated, etc," and will not use the "told me" unless he has an exclusive interview with Smith. But these differences in forms of writing are much more serious when it becomes not just a matter of style but of the whole subject matter. American correspondents were certain that *Pravda* and *Izvestia* did not give the picture of the Stalingrad battle that they wanted. A few of us even wrote letters to Stalin, asking for permission to go to the front, but we received no answers. I don't think any one expected a reply; I sent letters, and sometimes telegrams, to Stalin every month for two years when I was in Moscow before the war, and they were never acknowledged. But it was worth while, many correspondents did the same thing. It was like playing a slot machine, there was always a chance of hitting the jack-pot. Eugene Lyons, Walter Duranty, and Charlie Nutter were among those who had received replies during the years before the war.

The Battle of Stalingrad was one of the hardest-fought sieges in modern history; it may even have been one of the hardest in all history. I once attempted to make a few comparisons with the known records of similar battles, and I concluded that, based upon the number of men and the damage done, the Volga struggle must rank with those at the top. But, more important, it was

the greatest defeat Hitler had received since the beginning of the war. The victory outside Moscow in 1941 was not comparable in results. There are those who say that if Stalingrad had fallen we would have lost the war, and, while I think that statement is far too extreme, I believe it would have added months of toil and thousands of lives to the final cost of defeating the Nazis. Stalingrad will remain the proudest achievement of Russian arms.

CHAPTER XI

THE WILLKIE VISIT

THE VISIT OF Wendell Willkie aroused more interest in the American colony in Moscow than even Lindbergh's memorable flying trip in 1938. There were those who asserted the former presidential candidate was merely seeking publicity, and others who insisted he honestly wanted to strengthen Soviet-American friendship. I tried to butt in on a Willkie discussion one evening at the Metropole before he arrived, and a correspondent withered me by saying,

"You've been abroad so long that I don't think you know who Willkie is."

My having been in Europe for seven years without a trip home was something of a joke in Moscow; some of the newspapermen had been abroad as long, but they had been fortunate enough to have had interim vacations in America. Willkie was not a national figure when I left the United States, although I saw him in London when he was there during the blitz.

"I don't like these political junkets," said a correspondent, "Willkie is visiting the war fronts to keep his name on the front page. What business has he got in Russia?"

"Why shouldn't he come to Russia?" I asked.

"Because he has no official position. The Soviets are in a desperate situation, and all they want is a second front. They don't want sympathy or kind words without concrete action."

"But, as a leader of the Republican party, he has a good deal of influence, and his speeches at home will have more effect if he has seen Russia himself," I said.

"That's not the point: it's too late for speeches. The formation of a second front depends on military factors, and Roosevelt and Churchill will decide when they're ready. Willkie radio talks won't provide guns and ammunition."

"You may be right," I said, "but what harm can it do?"

"A lot of harm right now; Americans don't realize the irritating condescension involved in these see-for-yourself tours. Russia is fighting for her life; our ambassador, Admiral Standley, and the newspapermen are reporting all the facts available. Willkie won't learn anything new."

"Well, the British liked to have American leaders visit London," I protested.

"If you think they did, you're wrong. They wanted the United States to get into the war, but some of those visiting firemen used to drive them crazy. Churchill wore a path through the bombed areas showing them around. You saw that party of congressmen, for instance. Do you think the British enjoyed having them around?"

"Well—," I began.

"And take Willkie," he interrupted, "do you remember that picture of him in a London pub playing darts with the soldiers? If that wasn't done for publicity I'll eat my hat. Do you think the British, getting bombed every night, really thought his big brother stuff was amusing?"

"I think you're too extreme," I said. "You don't give the man any credit at all."

"No, because I think the war is far too serious to be used to further individual political ambitions. There's no earthly reason for Willkie making this trip except to keep in the public eye."

"Such cynicism," I remarked.

It seemed to me that Willkie was an able man who had many sound ideas both on the war and the post-war world. His trip

would help him to correlate his views and would be of inestimable value in guiding public thought at home. It was unfortunate that he arrived so soon after Churchill; there would inevitably be comparisons, yet there was no similarity in purpose. One came to Moscow as the head of his nation to consult with Stalin, the other was travelling as a private individual seeking information. It was also regrettable that his visit came at a time when the Soviet military outlook was so bad: the Russians were not in a mood to discuss anything but a second front. I was sure they would feel he had more of an official position at home than was actually the case. Countries governed by a one-party system are inclined to credit other nations with their own methods. No Soviet citizen could ever visit the United States and call at the White House unless he were picked by Stalin, and the Kremlin would suspect that Willkie's trip was not as unofficial as it appeared.

"Americans always make fun of their politicians, especially when they come to Europe," remarked an English correspondent. "It started with Mark Twain's 'Innocents Abroad,' and it has become a tradition."

I thought there was some truth in his observation. A classic story in the Paris edition of the *Chicago Tribune* during the gay Jimmie Walker days began,

"The twenty-four American mayors touring France today guzzled and belched their way out of yet another banquet at Strasbourg, etc."

We would have been insulted if the French had written about our mayors in that fashion, but Americans in Paris thought it was extremely funny. Ickes' characterization of Willkie as "the bare-foot boy from Wall Street" was recalled by newspapermen in London who had listened to Willkie's painfully earnest talks on democracy and international friendship. Yet I thought he was sincere and by no means as naïve as he appeared; he may have

been an amateur in politics and a theorist in international relations, but I believed he was honest. I feared he was getting into deep water by visiting the Soviet Union; it was difficult for a politician to make many mistakes in London, but Moscow was another story. I dreaded particularly that he would make sweeping statements about common war aims, the Four Freedoms, and the Soviet Union's place in the family of democracies. Those were words and phrases that came easily to the tongue, but they needed defining; they did not mean the same thing in Russia as they did in America.

Willkie's party included "Mike" Cowles, his election campaign manager, and Joe Barnes, the acting director of the Overseas Branch of the OWI. There was also an Army officer and a Naval officer, the latter, who was Willkie's brother-in-law, had been United States Naval attaché in Berlin before the war. Barnes was an old acquaintance with whom I had been associated when he was Moscow correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune* in 1937-38. He had a pleasant personality and a brilliant mind; I liked him, although I could not share his full-blown enthusiasm for all things Soviet. *Fortune* magazine in an article on the OWI referred to Barnes as a former correspondent who had served in Moscow, "a place that seems to have made a lasting impression on him." I believe Joe once rather rudely refused a job offered him by that expensive publication so there was a distinct taste of sour grapes in their comment. But even those of us who were fond of Joe wondered if he was the ideal guide to help Willkie "see for himself"—it was too much a labor of love. These fears, however, were unfounded; Joe did not lead Willkie up the garden path; he told him all he knew about Moscow, took him on tours around the city, and gave him good advice for his statements to the press.

We had heard of the fanfare that accompanied the former presidential candidate's tour through Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, and

Iran. It was reported he had "won the hearts" of the citizens in each country. In Bagdad, there had been a slight contretemps; he had a date one afternoon with the Prime Minister and went to the Government House with his party to see him. A small, unassuming man met the group in a private room; he gave his name, although nobody caught it, and Willkie introduced his fellow-guests. Then they sat around a table for five minutes, exchanging pleasantries about the weather and the beauties of Iraq. Growing restless, Willkie pulled out his watch and said,

"I don't like to hurry, but I have an appointment with the Prime Minister."

The little fellow coughed apologetically.

"I am the Prime Minister," he said modestly.

Witnesses told me that Willkie carried off this *gaffe* with aplomb.

In general, others said, despite a certain election-campaign manner, he made an excellent impression throughout the Arab country. His bluff heartiness contrasted well with the British reserve to which the natives were accustomed. A veteran newspaperman covering the Middle East added,

"It's the damndest thing I've ever seen. This is oil country, and Europeans have been fighting here for wells and pipelines for so long that the Arabs expect all foreigners to talk about concessions sooner or later. Willkie pats them on the back and gives them the old hand of friendship. They don't know quite what to make of it, but they love it."

General de Gaulle happened to be visiting Beirut when the seekers after "first-hand information" arrived in Syria, and the Free French leader welcomed them with a military display. Later, he poured out his troubles on Wendell's broad shoulders, lamenting his own unsatisfactory position in the circle of United Nations. This was not unusual; leaders of every country Willkie visited,

including Russia and China, told him their woes. Most of these complaints were already known to the White House and Downing Street, but it is possible that hearing them individually may have given Willkie a better picture of their relative importance in the whole struggle.

The party did not fly direct to Moscow from Iran but went instead to Kuybyshev where they stayed a few days. While there, Wendell visited several factories and a collective farm; and, with Joe Barnes interpreting, he talked to workers about the war, living conditions, and food problems. He was impressed with factory production records and with the morale of the men and women whom he met. He said the suffering of the people and the tremendous national effort Russia was putting into the war had to be seen to be believed. This was true; the correspondents had written thousands of words on the subject, and they were aware how difficult it was to do justice to the hardships and strain. It was generally agreed that Willkie could help in his speeches at home by telling what he had seen, but, unfortunately, Stalin had only one request and he was not convinced that either London or Washington had to be told more about Russia's desperate need in order that this request would be granted. The time for words and promises had passed; it was not enough for visitors to come to the Soviet Union and shake their heads with astonishment at conditions.

While in Moscow, the visitors were lodged at the government guest house where Averell Harriman had stayed. The correspondents called on Willkie soon after he arrived. He was enthusiastic about what he had seen in Kuybyshev and said he hoped to go to the front during his stay in Russia. He had a letter of introduction to Stalin from President Roosevelt. We asked him how he felt about an Allied invasion of Europe, and he replied that he was in favor of making the attempt as soon as possible.

"Of course, I don't know all the military factors," he said, "but it seems to me we can't let Russia fight alone much longer. It's for our own good to help her now."

Willkie talked with the logic of a trained lawyer, but his admission of not knowing "all the military factors" detracted from the force of his statements. He impressed me as sincere, and his forthrightness was liked by the newspapermen. We asked him questions about the other countries he had visited; he had visited the British Eighth Army in the Middle East and prophesied (correctly, as it developed) that Rommel would soon be retreating.

The party was travelling in a B-24 bomber, but Willkie went by train into Turkey when he visited Ankara.

"I didn't want the plane and crew to be interned," he explained. "The Turks are strict about their neutrality."

The waiters served vodka and cognac, and Willkie began to ask us questions about Russia. He said it was the first time he had visited Moscow, and he was particularly anxious to understand the outlook and problems of the Soviet Union.

"I have come here with an open mind," he declared. "I want to learn all I can."

He believed his trip would give him a better grasp of both the immediate and long-term war aims of our allies, about which, he said, "too little is known in America." He talked at some length on this theme, and before we left, Joe Barnes invited Robert Magidoff and me to have breakfast with them the next morning. He said Willkie wanted to have two newspapermen as guests at each meal during his stay in order to get as many viewpoints as possible. Magidoff was born in Russia and had been naturalized an American; he knew the Soviet Union well and spoke the language better than any other reporter. He said he would call for me in time to go to breakfast. It was late when I started back to the Metropole with another correspondent.

"What do you think?" the newspaperman asked me when we left the house.

"Willkie strikes me as a good guy," I said. "I think he'll do all right."

"I know, but he's a babe-in-the-woods politically," he asserted. "I used to cover Washington, and I've seen it before. They all get bitten by this international bug sooner or later."

"He admits he's an amateur," I said.

"Yes, but you heard him talking about war aims. I wonder if he realizes Stalin's only war aim is to drive the Germans to hell out of Russia. He thinks the Soviets will cooperate in some super-plan to keep world peace."

"He might be right at that," I said. "The trouble with us is we saw too much of the pre-war politicians. Willkie's idealism is a little embarrassing because he is really talking about our own disillusionment."

"Perhaps you've got something there," he admitted.

"I'll tell you why I think so. My last year at Washington and Lee University I went to Staunton and spoke at the local Rotary club on the kind of world that college students wanted to see," I explained. "It was kid stuff, but I thought of it tonight when I was listening to Willkie. He talked about the same things that I tried to express."

"Oh, the fundamental idea is sound," he said, "but I don't think Willkie has a sufficiently practical approach."

This feeling about lack of a "sufficiently practical approach" seemed to seize all Americans whenever our politicians ventured near European shores. The State Department had been created to deal with the mysterious abracadabra of international relations, and we wanted to leave it with them. A senator or congressman could always get applause by branding our career diplomats as tea-drinking society buds, but, at the same time, there was a sort

of left-handed pride that we had representatives who knew these arts. Yet, a succession of American ambassadors to England had been made to feel conspicuous by the ban on court dress: I had heard of one who gloomily attended a levee wearing a tuxedo and was three times mistaken for a waiter. The deep-seated distrust of "foreign entanglements" might work to Willkie's political disadvantage at home, but that was his own business; at the moment, there was a possibility that his visit might improve Soviet-American relations.

Magidoff and I enjoyed our breakfast with Willkie; the talk was amusing, and the food was better than we had had for months. He gave us news of people and events in the United States and showed a great curiosity about everything Russian. His informal conversation revealed a good knowledge of Soviet affairs; he had prepared for his trip by reading as much as he could. Having been abroad during his presidential campaign, I was interested in his remarks on domestic politics. I happened to mention a political figure who was serving on a foreign mission. Willkie laughed.

"I guess he wanted that job pretty bad," he said. "During the election, he contributed money to both the Democrats and Republicans. He hoped to be appointed no matter who won."

Wendell's outlook was not cynical, but I thought he had enough of the "practical approach" to satisfy all his critics. I returned to the hotel after breakfast, and Magidoff remained behind to talk with Joe Barnes. Magidoff had married an attractive Russian girl, Nina, who had gone to the United States and taken American citizenship. She was living with Barnes' family. He had been looking forward for weeks to Joe's arrival in order to hear news of Nina; he felt the separation keenly, especially since he had been in Russia continuously since 1938. According to law, naturalized American citizens cannot live abroad for more than two years at a time without losing their citizenship, but special exceptions had

been made in the case of Magidoff and Henry Shapiro who, like Alexander Werth and Maurice Hindus, were Russian-born.

Stalin gave a dinner for Willkie in the Kremlin that night; there were many distinguished Soviet leaders present, and it was successful for all concerned except the British ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr. That genial but unfortunate envoy listened to Stalin make a fairly bitter speech in which the Russian premier alleged among other things that the British had appropriated a shipment of American planes destined for the Soviet Union. He also said the British were not sending their best fighter aircraft to Russia. He implied that some attempt had been made to conceal these facts from the Russians. Clark Kerr made a spirited defense, but it was not an auspicious beginning. The appropriated shipment was an old story; I had heard that the Americans themselves ordered the planes transferred to the British for special reasons, that there was nothing unusual about the transfer. The quality of various British fighters, of course, was a debatable point; the Soviets apparently thought Hurricanes were not as good as Spitfires, although many RAF pilots liked Hurricanes better than any other type.

Stalin and Willkie seemed to get along very well; besides the usual expressions of good-will common on such occasions each had an obvious respect for the other. Willkie's unofficial position made it easier for him to be understanding and sympathetic about Russian problems. Clark Kerr, for example, definitely represented the British government; Willkie represented only himself; it could not be accurately stated that he even spoke for the Republican party.

One American at the dinner found himself seated beside Lavrenti Berea, the Commissar of Internal Security, known colloquially as the NKVD, or the OGPU. The American, who spoke Russian fluently, had long dreamed of the opportunity to discuss

the purge with the man who did the purging. From cautious generalities on the arrests, he drifted to mild criticism, and finally, stimulated by vodka and wine, he declared,

"Many people were guilty I admit, but you also executed a good many who were innocent."

Berea, who also had not been neglecting the vodka, choked on his drink. Words like that in the Kremlin!

"That's not true," he said, his face white with anger. "You don't know the facts. They were guilty."

The American said, when he saw Berea's expression he sobered immediately, thinking he had been unwise to insult the head of the OGPU while in Moscow. But he had gone so far that he decided to continue.

"I was here in 1937 and 1938, and I knew many of the people who were arrested," he said. "Some were my friends, and I am sure they were innocent."

There was a bitter argument. Berea was so angry when dinner was over that he walked away without speaking. But the evening's entertainment was not finished. After dinner, the guests went into another room to see a newsreel. While waiting for the film to begin, Marshal Voroshiloff decided to amuse the guests by showing them a new type of machine gun. The good Marshal had been drinking copious glasses of vodka, and, as he ordered his aide to bring in the gun, it was noticed that he was a bit unsteady. Nevertheless, he completely dismantled the machine gun and put it back together again without a hitch. Stalin watched the proceedings with a benign eye.

The final verdict on the banquet was that it had served a useful purpose in allowing Stalin to air his grievances, to talk as he would have been unable to do if Willkie had been conducting official negotiations. He was well aware, of course, that his statements would be reported to the White House and Downing Street,

but there was a difference between speeches at a banquet and a direct exchange of notes. Willkie, as a defeated presidential candidate, could honestly assert he favored a second front without committing America to an invasion, yet he was a powerful enough political figure so that his presence was not without significance. Relations with America had been consistently better than with any other country: recognition of the Soviet Union had come during the administration of President Roosevelt, and the White House had been generous with Lend-Lease from the beginning of the conflict. There was no criticism, direct or indirect, of American aid; the complaints were against Britain. The lack of a second front, in the final analysis, was as much America's affair as Britain's. Willkie favored an immediate European invasion on general principles, without knowing all the "military factors"; he was, therefore, *persona grata* at the Kremlin as a friend of the Soviet Union, and, although the meeting did not materially alter the situation, it helped clear the atmosphere.

Certain correspondents suggested that Roosevelt should have learned a lesson in his relations with Willkie from Churchill's method in dealing with Sir Stafford Cripps on the Indian question. They said that Cripps, with his liberal record, would have been a thorn in the side of the Prime Minister by urging Indian independence, had he remained outside the government. But he accepted a Cabinet post, and Churchill, with remarkable astuteness, sent him to New Delhi to try to settle the problem. Cripps's failure in India robbed British liberals of their ammunition; they could not call Cripps a Colonel Blimp. The fallacy in this reasoning was that Roosevelt did try to get Willkie in the government; there were overtures, at least, for him to become ambassador to the Court of St. James. But Willkie declined, preferring to head the opposition, which was politically the wiser move.

The former candidate was up early the day after the banquet,

continuing his inspection, but most of his party slept late recovering from Kremlin hospitality. Willkie looked fresh, as though he had gone to bed at an early hour; his curiosity about Moscow was as great as ever. He spent the day seeing new sights and attended a concert by a factory jazz orchestra. It began to rain in the evening, and, a little before midnight, Wendell bundled his worn comrades into a Ziss limousine for the ninety-eight-mile drive to the Rzhev front. This was the highlight of their program, and they were not going to let unfavorable weather interfere with a chance to see the army. They drove through the stygian drizzle, and, at four o'clock in the morning, reached the improvised corduroy road. They had rough going for a few hours and finally transferred to jeeps; these handy vehicles made better time, although the occupants were shaken considerably and sometimes had difficulty holding on. When they arrived at headquarters, they were given breakfast, after which they briskly set out for a tour of the front. The light rain continued, and the whole Rzhev area was so muddy that walking was difficult, but, as the commander remarked, front-line conditions were often worse.

They were shown a group of German prisoners who, Willkie said, were "poor specimens." They had a hangdog sullen appearance, and they were physically not impressive. The prisoners appeared confident that the Germans would ultimately win the war, and they would gain their freedom. Willkie asked them questions through an interpreter, and they answered briefly. They were unwilling to talk more than was required.

"I realized that if these wretched men were our enemy we could beat them," Willkie said later.

I asked him, "Did they know who you were?"

He looked momentarily surprised and answered, "I hadn't thought of that. No, I don't believe they did."

It might have been effective propaganda among the German

prisoners to have identified Willkie, as evidence of American interest in the Soviet front.

The party finished their tour in the late afternoon and started back to Moscow after having supper in camp. They arrived at the guest house shortly before one o'clock in the morning and tumbled into bed exhausted. They had been almost two nights without sleep, driven two hundred miles over unbelievably rough roads, and walked for hours through a muddy front sector. Even Willkie, who had outlasted all of his team-mates, admitted he was worn out.

The brief period that I saw Wendell in Russia convinced me that he had amazing vitality and stamina. His schedule was gruelling, and he had been keeping to this routine ever since he had left America. He had done the same things in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, and he had a lengthy program planned for his visit to Chungking, the next stop after Moscow.

The American embassy in Moscow traditionally entertains distinguished visitors with a cocktail party. This is a simple method of introducing them to the entire diplomatic colony; the ambassador's residence, Spazo House, is large enough to accommodate all available guests, even in peace-time. The attachés wanted to give a cocktail party for Willkie, but the supply of whiskey in Russia had shrunk to almost medicinal proportions, and there was no gin or vermouth or any of the other ingredients commonly associated with cocktails. There was, however, an ample supply of vodka, and the embassy had recently received several cases of canned grapefruit juice. Vodka and grapefruit juice do not make the ideal mixed drink; the best that can be said for the concoction is that the grapefruit juice kills the taste of the vodka, and it can be swallowed without noticeable effort. The second drink is, of course, easier than the first. So it was decided a few punch-bowls of this liquid dynamite would have to serve; it would be a stag

affair since the wives of the diplomats had all left Russia at the beginning of the war.

I sampled the beverage when I arrived, and found it extremely potent; the only comparison I could make was with a drink served at Shepherd's Bar in Cairo called a "Suffering Bastard." This was not a pleasurable cocktail; it was supposed to be a "hangover cure." Nevertheless, the party was a great success. It was Willkie's last day in Moscow, and he was pleased that he had been able to do so much in such a short time. Within a week, he had visited the front, talked with Stalin, and inspected numerous factories and cultural institutions. He had an untiring and avid curiosity; the Russians, accustomed to polite interest from official visitors, had been surprised at the eagerness with which he took in every detail. I remarked to a friend at the cocktail party that Willkie must have been a great lawyer if he briefed his cases with the thoroughness which he had shown while in the Soviet Union.

After the party, he went to the Metropole to attend a small reception which the correspondents had arranged for him; while there he gave us a final statement on his impressions. There was little new in his remarks except the emphasis which he placed on the hardships which the Russians would have to face during the coming winter. He stressed the clothing and food shortage, the lack of heat, and said it was not unlikely that thousands would starve in the bitter months ahead. These were facts which had long been known to the correspondents, but which the censors had not allowed us to cable abroad. Willkie believed the American people should be told the extent of Russian suffering, and, apparently the press department agreed with him, because they passed his statements without comment. This marked an important change in Soviet policy; they had hitherto preferred to keep silent on many of the domestic hardships in order not to reveal condi-

tions to the enemy. There were now few restrictions on despatches concerning domestic economy.

Newspapermen who had spoken critically of Willkie's tour before he arrived surprised me by referring to him in complimentary terms after he had been in Moscow a few days. This was an unusual tribute to his personality; he was not a man whom it was easy to dislike. Correspondents were at first suspicious of his frankness and sincerity; they thought it was an election mannerism. But it became clear during the week that he was with us, that he was genuinely seeking information. He worked too hard to be merely trying to impress onlookers. His visit undoubtedly pleased the Soviets; they gave him all the facilities which he requested and entertained him as well as they had Churchill. He was one of the few Republican party leaders who had ever come to Russia; the Kremlin had not forgotten the days of non-recognition during the Coolidge and Hoover administrations, and it is probable that they would have given Willkie an even more royal welcome if he had arrived in peace-time.

It is difficult to assess the value of the visit against the background of the war. It did not result in any tangible changes, but, as a good-will gesture, it came at an opportune time. Willkie was unfortunate in one respect to follow Churchill so closely and to arrive when the military situation was so unfavorable, but it gave the Soviets an opportunity to air their troubles. This, in the long run, may prove to have been a good thing. The consensus of opinion among Moscow observers was that Wendell's tour, while not a major event of the war, was favorable to Soviet-American relations.

CHAPTER XII

RUSSIAN WOMEN

MORE THAN seventy per cent of the workers in Soviet industry are women.

This statement, taken from the official report of the Commissar of Heavy Industry in January, 1943, represented the peak utilization of feminine labor since the outbreak of war. It was an impressive figure and helped to explain some of the surprising Russian successes, particularly the Red Army's apparently limitless reservoir of manpower. The statistics were concerned only with production and did not give the number of women who were engaged in semi-military activities at the front, such as nurses, cooks, members of the signal corps, and pilots of transport planes. This total mobilization of population was less difficult in Russia than in other countries because the Soviets had, in effect, been preparing for it for twenty years. The Russian per capita employment of women could not be equalled by other nations in a short time. There were many factors, such as training and the psychological adjustments necessary for change from housework to factory employment, making the transfer of women to industry necessarily a slow process. Germany was closest to Russia, next came England, and last the United States and Italy. American women adapt themselves easily, and it is probable that with their unusually good standards of health and education, the U. S. A. could soon overcome its late start. But Italy had made little progress, and there were no indications that Italian women were losing their antipathy for the factory. This was partly the fault of the

men who were traditionally opposed to having their women leave the home.

I first saw Soviet women doing manual work in May, 1937, when the train on which I was travelling crossed the frontier from Poland. I happened to look out of the window at a parallel stretch of track which was being repaired. Barefoot women wearing faded cotton dresses and with kerchiefs tied around their heads, were carrying railroad ties on their shoulders, swinging pick-axes, and pushing wheelbarrows. They were browned and weather-beaten, husky peasant types as strong as men; I was surprised to see women performing such heavy manual labor, but my fellow-passengers showed so little interest that I realized it must have been a familiar sight, and later I became accustomed to it myself. Women shovelled the snow from Moscow streets, they were carpenters and builders, and it was common to see those engaged in digging the new subway clumping home from work in the heavy boots worn in the tunnels.

Sex equality in Russia had more than a political connotation; women were guaranteed equality of opportunity, but they also had to accept the responsibilities that went with their new privileges. They might aspire to the highest positions, but they could also be ditch diggers. It was work equality in a literal sense. They had, however, excelled in many fields: one capable woman, Paulina Zhemchuzhina, had become the first feminine member of the cabinet, as Commissar of Fishing Industry. Her appointment in 1939 caused a certain amount of heart-burning in Soviet feminine circles because she happened to be Molotov's wife; favoritism was hinted. However that might be, Zhemchuzhina was not a newcomer to political office; she had formerly been Vice-Commissar of Food Industry and was once head of the Soviet Cosmetic and Perfume Trust. While holding the latter position, in 1936, she visited the United States and attended a luncheon at

the White House. Another outstanding feminine leader was Kolantay, the Russian ambassadress to Sweden. Born in St. Petersburg of a noble family, she had early joined the Communists and was one of the few "old bolsheviks" still in the government. It was understood that Stalin was not fond of her but tolerated her because of the regard in which she had been held by Lenin. The names of flyers such as Paulina Osipenko, Marina Raskova, and Nadja Grizadubova were famous throughout Russia, and ballet stars like Lipischinskaya were idolized wherever they went.

These women had attained national fame in peace-time, and there were thousands of feminine judges, lawyers, writers, and doctors, leaders in their own communities, who had also risen to their positions long before the war. Women engineers and conductors on trains, for example, were not employed merely as a result of military necessity; they were accepted as a matter of course. Educational opportunities had been seized by women as enthusiastically as by men; Russian girls revealed enormous eagerness and hunger for knowledge. Stalin encouraged the feminine renaissance; he directed the expansion of schools and colleges and offered prizes and other incentives for hard work. In 1937, Maria Demchenko, a young girl at an agricultural college, won a prize for raising the greatest quantity of sugar beets in her class. Stalin happened to hear of it and invited her to visit Moscow. He gave her a dinner at the Kremlin, and was photographed with her in a box at the opera. He rarely indulged in such gestures, being far too busy; his honoring of Demchenko was an unusual demonstration of his interest in education.

The changed position of women in the Russian social structure was wholly good, both for them and for the country. Extremist racial and eugenic theories, such as those which the Nazis had forced upon Germany, had never found favor with the Soviets. Marriage and divorce had been simplified: each was now a brief

legal ceremony, but there were not an unusual number of divorces. I once discussed this with a Soviet judge, and he said,

"The majority of men and women seeking divorce do not consider whether the legal procedure is complicated or simple. They want to be separated, and, in many cases, they will go to any lengths to do so. Our system is not as easy as it would appear: there are certain checks. Provision has to be made for the support of children, for example, and the couple have to settle ownership of their room or apartment."

Crowded living conditions in Russian cities gave cogency to this last argument: rooms and apartments were so scarce that breaking up the home was a serious matter. Either the husband or wife was faced with the difficult task of finding a new domicile. Factories and offices usually provided rooms for their employees, and they were reluctant and frequently unable to make changes necessitated by domestic conflicts. I asked if a man could get married as many times as he wanted.

"In theory, yes, but in practice, no," said the judge. "We investigate people who attempt to abuse our divorce laws. We find there is usually something irregular about a man who has time to get married and divorced several times. As you know, we do not encourage immorality."

The Soviet claim that they had eliminated prostitution in Russia was justified. They closed the houses and arrested street-walkers after the revolution, and they gradually changed the economic factors that had caused many young girls to enter the profession. But the Russians recognized that economic necessity was not the only cause of prostitution; they realized that some women preferred the life as "easier" than working. These problem cases were forced to work and, as a last resort, exiled to Siberia. Education and universal employment did more, however, than police measures. The venereal disease rate in the Soviet Union was

very low as result of compulsory medical treatment. The judge said the courts dealt with fewer cases of sexual immorality each year.

"There are grades of prostitutes," he explained, "from what the French call the *poule de luxe* or kept woman, to the street-corner wench whose boudoir is in a back alley. None of these fit in our society. But, in the final analysis, it is a question both of correcting conditions and of enforcing the law. Half-way measures are bound to fail."

The serious overtones of Soviet life may have contributed to their matter-of-fact attitude toward sex, but it was not a subject that preoccupied them. The films and the theatre did not emphasize love stories. The Russian outlook was very much like that of the old Arab sheik who was once invited by some Americans to witness a movie starring Ramon Novarro. There was one scene where the heroine went to bed and Novarro stretched out on some blankets in front of the door to spend the night. At this point, the old sheik got up and walked out, indignantly snorting,

"It's a damn lie!"

The progress which women had made in industry and in the learned professions was noticeable in the many executive positions held by them. Men did not object to women bosses. I visited a large factory where three of the floor superintendents were women. I talked with one and asked her if her advance had been more difficult because of her sex.

"No," she replied. "I have been working here fifteen years, and there were no women foremen when I started. But the feeling has changed; skill and efficiency are all that count now. I do not believe any of the men here object to me because I am a woman."

"Do men and women usually work together in factories?" I asked.

"It depends on what is being manufactured. As a rule, we find

that it is better to have all men or all women, but that was impossible here."

A young girl, dressed in overalls, passed us, and the foreman said,

"That is my daughter, Marina. She has a little baby who is being taken care of in our creche. Would you like to see the nursery?"

I said I would, and the foreman conducted me upstairs to a spacious, well-lighted room where nurses in white uniform were tending the babies of women who worked in the factory. There were thirty-three children, ranging in ages from infants in cradles to boys and girls two and three years old. Everything was spotlessly clean, and a nurse was supervising the play of the older children. The foreman told me there was a small park in the rear of the factory where the children were taken to play.

"We give them a hot meal at noon and pay careful attention to their health," the foreman said.

"It looks as if they are better off here than they would be at home," I remarked.

"That is true," said the foreman. "It is a good system, and, just from our own standpoint, we find that women naturally work better when they are not worried about their children."

"This is a state-owned institution and does not need to make profits, but do you think privately-owned factories abroad could afford to install creches?" I asked.

"I should think they would be worth while, even under the capitalist system," she said. "Especially for factories employing large numbers of women. It would improve efficiency and reduce absenteeism, besides creating good-will."

"How much time off does a woman get when she is pregnant?" I asked.

"We give two-months leave with pay before the baby is born,

and a month afterwards. We used to give a longer time, but we found that some women purposely became pregnant just to have the time off."

The foreman and I returned to the main floor, and she went away to attend to her own work. She was an efficient woman, and had given me straightforward answers to my questions. She was an excellent example of the new type of Soviet worker, aware of the defects in the system, but proud of what Russia had accomplished, and believing in the nation's future.

The women traffic policemen in Moscow had always attracted comment from tourists with their military smartness, and I talked to one who usually stood on the busy Gorki Street corner. She said she had started as a typist in the police bureau and had been in the uniformed service for ten years. They had a special course for women in directing traffic.

"Do you like the work?" I asked.

"No," she said. "I am sorry I started. We are out in all kinds of weather, and the work gets monotonous. But it is too late to change now."

The most monotonous profession for women had always seemed to me to be that of Soviet tourist guides. They were trained to answer any conceivable type of question, and some of the replies were masterpieces of evasion. These girls could rattle off production figures with the same expressionless ease that they explained the purge. I have seen them listen patiently to arguments between Soviet sympathizers and Soviet critics, and, when it was finished, continue calmly,

"And now on our left we have Lenin's tomb, etc."

It would have been worth something to know what they were really thinking, but they had built up an impenetrable wall of reserve. I had known some of the guides for two and three years, and I had never heard one of them express a positive opinion on

any subject, so great was the force of habit. They were prudent, however, to stick to the book; there was nothing to gain by engaging in forensics with visitors.

When war broke out, millions of Russian women took their husbands' places on the farms and in the factories, but the actresses and ballet girls were ordered to continue their peace-time activities. In 1941, when the Germans neared Moscow, the ballet moved to Kuybyshev. Later, the first ballet company, which used to entertain in the Bolshoi Theatre opposite the Metropole Hotel, stayed in Kuybyshev for the amusement of the diplomatic corps, and the second company returned to Moscow. Actors and actresses likewise kept the stage and cinema running without interruption. The important contributions to national morale of these diversions had always been understood and accepted by the Soviet government. During the long months of siege, the Leningrad ballerinas and actresses made life a little less grim for the inhabitants and helped them to forget their hunger and sufferings. Many individual ballet stars and actresses toured the front and gave performances within range of shell-fire.

The ballet has always occupied a unique place in Russian national life; it was the favorite entertainment of the Czar's court, and, after the revolution, the Soviets instituted few changes except to make it available for the masses. They broadened it and established numerous schools for the training of children as dancers. Unlike the stage, which suffered from a narrow ideological approach, the ballet was not greatly affected by the revolution. During the early years of want and semi-famine, the ballet dancers received favored treatment; they were petted and nursed like hot-house flowers. It was not strange, then, that the Bolshoi Theatre was the goal of every Russian mother with a talented daughter.

Women were aware that the greatest rewards in Soviet life went to artists, whether in the field of music, painting, dancing, or the

stage. The compensations were on a capitalistic scale. It was possible, for instance, to earn 100,000 rubles (20,000 dollars) a year, and such salaries were paid to men like Prokofief, the composer, and Eisenstein, the movie director. Ilya Ehrenburg, the writer, had won the Stalin prize of 100,000 rubles for one of his books. Other advantages, such as permission to own a dacha, or country home, and the right to buy a car, and the granting of an apartment of three or four rooms, went to artists. These privileges were worth more than the actual cash salary because they were limited to so few people. But the ballet, like other desirable occupations, did not entirely escape government surveillance; even girls who had reached the pinnacle of the Moscow stage might be exiled to small companies in far cities for certain offenses. There was a star whose political agility was equal to the swiftness of her dancing feet. She had been married to a commissar who was arrested for a political offense; relatives and wives were usually under suspicion in these affairs, so she immediately divorced him and married another commissar. Unfortunately, her new husband was arrested a month later, but, not discouraged, she divorced him and married again. This time, she seemed to have made the right choice, for, night after night, she bowed to applause in the theatre, with apparently few troubles disturbing her tranquillity. These gossipy episodes only added spice to the popularity of the ballet; it was a satisfying evening's entertainment for every front-line soldier on leave.

Stalin's attitude toward women has had an important bearing on their position in Soviet society. His power and influence is so great that it is difficult to discuss any side of Russian life without reference to his views on the subject. This is, of course, true concerning all political questions, but his example has even had an effect on such minor matters as simplicity of dress and the popularity of men's pipe-smoking. He has been married twice; little is

known about either woman except that his second wife was small and dark. She was said to be a Georgian with the olive complexion and vivacity of that race. She may have been naturally shy and retiring or she may have been dwarfed by the overpowering personality of her husband, but she was not outstanding in bolshevik circles like Molotov's wife, Zhemchusina. Stalin is not a sentimentalist about women; he was good to his mother and to Lenin's widow, Krupskaya, but neither woman was glorified as a national figure. They were pensioned by the state; his mother lived in a simple cottage, and Krupskaya was active in education and virtually supported herself. They had no luxuries and little more than the comforts to which they would have ordinarily been entitled. Stalin's two sons were in the service, one in the army and the other in the air force, but their father did not favor them. Major Stalin, the older boy, distinguished himself as a fighter pilot at Stalingrad, winning the Order of the Red Banner. It is certain he won the decoration by his own bravery; Stalin would not tolerate the reward being given simply because of his name. Both sons were engineers before the war and took no part in political activities; their father has made it clear that he does not expect either of them to succeed him.

I discovered the grave of Stalin's second wife by accident in the summer of 1938. I was interested in buying some ikons and visited an old Moscow church to see if there were any holy relics left. It was a hot day, and I wandered out in the cemetery back of the church. The shade of the thick-foliaged massive trees and the cool breeze were so inviting that I began to study the gravestones; many of them were very old and the inscriptions were worn thin. The graveyard had not been cared for; tall grass and weeds were everywhere, and a few of the stones were tipped over. I sat down on a moss-covered bench and was enjoying the quietness of the scene when I heard a sound not unlike that of cooing pigeons. I

looked in the direction of the noise and saw an old woman sitting on the grass in the enclosure of a family burial plot. The woman must have been in her seventies, but the unusual thing was that she had a baby with her, and the sound I had heard was the woman crooning to the baby. Neither of them had noticed me. The baby was climbing over the gravestones and having a good time under the eye of the old woman who appeared to be a nurse or a servant. I walked over to them, and, as soon as the old woman heard me, she looked at me frightenedly, picked up the baby and scampered out of the cemetery. I watched them go, regretting that I had disturbed their pleasure, and then I looked at the name on the family plot. It was that of one of the old Moscow nobility.

Being an incurable romantic, I like to think that the old woman had worked for the family and that the baby was a descendant of some branch which had escaped the purge. I pictured the faithful retainer bringing the baby to the place where its ancestors slept; all that the family represented was gone, and even their memory was preserved only in a dilapidated cemetery. This pleasant notion unfortunately was not likely to be true; it was much more probable that the old woman had simply brought the baby to play in the churchyard because it was quiet and cool. I continued inspecting the gravestones and was surprised to see a plot that had been well cared for; the stone was a plain marble pillar about six feet high. The grass was cut, and there were fresh flowers at the base of the pillar. I read the inscription and realized that this was the grave of Stalin's second wife. It was an interesting discovery; it was new to me, but I later found that several members of the American colony in Moscow knew of its existence and had gone to see it. No one had been able to learn anything of its history, but it was generally believed that Stalin's wife had been a religious woman and had requested to be buried in a church cemetery. I have said that Stalin was not a sentimentalist, yet here was evi-

dence of a soft trait in the character of the man who was absolute lord over one hundred and eighty million people.

The known evidence would indicate that Stalin has given devotion to only two people, his second wife and Lenin. There is much to show the love he bore for Lenin, but only the Moscow grave gives any clue to his feeling toward his wife. Yet that gesture remains more eloquent than anything he may have done during her life. The simplicity of the marble shaft, the fresh flowers, and the church cemetery tell the story.

It has been said that Stalin's concern for the education and welfare of women was not motivated by altruism but was as much a defense measure as his effort to strengthen the Red Army. Whatever his motives, the net result was the same. Hitler could not have anticipated that Russian women would be such an important factor in Soviet power. It has been officially admitted that eight million men were replaced by women in light industry alone. Not all of these men went into the army; many were transferred to other defense work. The U.S.S.R. maintained its tremendous striking power throughout the war, launching fresh attacks after suffering colossal losses, because of these feminine reinforcements on the home front. Women were the hard core of Russian war industries. American critics of the policy of increasing the United States army to twelve million men have asserted that a certain numerical point can be reached beyond which it is unwise to expand the army because the farms and factories will be unable to supply the men in the field. The critics argued that the men were needed for production, and that vital supplies would be lacking if the working manpower were drafted. The same debate has taken place in England. Women have solved this problem for Russia. The Soviets have lost more men than any other Allied nation; it seemed that only a second front in Europe could save them at the end of the summer of 1942. According to all the laws of military science,

they had shot their bolt and failed; but the women figuratively gave them another bolt, and this time they succeeded. There was no historical precedent for such a recovery; women had never before been an important military factor.

"Soviet factory girls can be thanked if Hitler ends his days in an insane asylum chewing rugs," once remarked a correspondent. The Fuehrer's occasional complaints about the Red Army's exasperating refusal to stay "wiped out" was in effect an acknowledgment of his underestimation of Russian strength. But, at the same time, it is doubtful if any foreigner correctly estimated the feminine element in Soviet military potentiality.

Women doctors and nurses have saved thousands of lives at the front; their heroism under fire has come to be accepted as an attribute of their profession. The story is told of one nurse who crawled out in a shell-pocked battlefield thirty-two times and returned each time to the dressing station with a wounded man on her back. But on the last trip both she and the wounded soldier she was carrying were killed by machine-gun fire. The incident was typical of the sacrifice shown by all women who volunteered for duty at the front. Ambulance drivers whose machines were bombed to pieces on the road; women transport pilots whose defenseless planes were shot down by German fighters: these were reported in every day's military chronicle. The Soviets were particular in selecting the women they allowed to go to the front; there were many applicants, but the army rejected more than they accepted. They usually advised girls instead to work in defense industries and warned that life with the Red Army was hard. But, even with these precautions, mistakes were made, and girls sometimes had to be sent home as unable to stand the strain. I talked with a girl who had been ordered to return to Moscow after five months on the central front.

"How old do you think I am?" she asked.

This is a question that usually requires a diplomatic answer when asked by a woman, and, looking at her thin face and the streaks of gray in her hair, I said,

"About twenty-eight."

She shook her head.

"No, I look older than twenty-eight, and you know it, but, as a matter of fact, I am twenty-four."

It was incredible that she could be so much younger than she appeared; even her eyes had a mature, tired look.

"This is a picture of me taken six months ago," she said, handing me a snapshot. It was the photograph of a young girl; I could see the resemblance, but there was a difference of years.

"Well," I remarked with feeble understatement, "you've changed."

"That is what five months at the front did to me," she exclaimed. "I could not stand it; I almost went crazy."

"It must be pretty bad," I sympathized.

"Yes, it is terrible, but, you see, it is my fault. Some girls get adjusted to the life, and it doesn't affect them so much. I am too nervous, and I have not the right temperament. I could not sleep, and I constantly thought of the things I had seen on the battlefield."

"You can help by working here in Moscow," I said.

"I know," she replied. "But it is not the same thing. I volunteered to go to the front and was very happy when they accepted me. Yet I knew after the first enemy artillery barrage that I would not be able to stand it."

"You should have told your commanding officer that you felt you had made a mistake."

"I wanted to do so many times, but I hoped I might get over the feeling. It just got worse, until finally I had to leave."

"How did you like the life, aside from the bombing?"

"It was the greatest experience of my life. I will never forget the comradeship of the girls and the soldiers. It meant more to me than anything I have ever known."

"How were living conditions?" I asked.

"We slept in dug-outs. We were cold in winter, but it was all right in summer. We had warmer clothes than the Germans, and the snow did not bother us as much as it did them. The spring was the worst of all with the rain and the mud."

"How was the food?"

"There was plenty of it, but there was no variety. We had three hot meals a day. We always had soup at noon with meat and cabbage and bread. I had more to eat than my mother here at home. The men were given a ration of vodka and a package of cigarettes each week."

"Were there many girls stationed at your sector?"

"No, just nurses and ambulance drivers. There were about a dozen girls doing special work at headquarters, but I did not see them very often. There were a few Mongolian women with their troops, but they did not speak Russian, so I could not talk with them."

I felt sorry for the girl because of the keen disappointment which she felt in herself. I once met a parachutist who had been transferred to another service because he lost his nerve at the last minute and couldn't jump. He was introspective and brooded about what he called his cowardice. It had destroyed his self-confidence. The girl felt much the same way about her failure at the front. Both cases, of course, had causes other than the lack of physical courage, but neither could accept any other explanation.

Because of the exacting Red Army system of selection there were few front-line girls who cracked under the strain. The majority conducted themselves creditably under all conditions. Soviet military decorations carried certain rewards with them such as a

trip home with all expenses paid, or a trip to Moscow with hotel accommodations and amusements provided, so it was not uncommon to see uniformed girls visiting the city wearing newly-won medals. Members of the services usually stayed at the Moskva Hotel, and any evening the lobby presented a good cross-section of the cream of Russia's fighting forces. Black-uniformed Cossacks mingled with blond Russian girls, and Uzbekistan officers talked with Ukrainian defense workers, while other soldiers just sat and watched the panorama, happy to be away from the trenches. I arranged an interview one afternoon with a girl ambulance driver who had just been awarded the Order of the Red Banner and was spending her leave in Moscow. She was quite the opposite of the girl who had been dismissed and sent home; she was a gay, capable little woman, filled with confidence in the Red Army and Russian victory. She talked easily and with no trace of self-consciousness.

"I was a chauffeur before the war," she said. "I have two brothers in the army, and I wanted to go where I could help most. It is nothing unusual."

"Are you a trained nurse?"

"No," she replied, "but I have learned a little about first-aid. Sometimes I work with the stretcher-bearers."

"You must have been under fire a good deal," I said. "Do you get used to it?"

"It does not bother me as much now as it did at first. The airplanes are the worst. They dive along the road and machine-gun us. We cannot hear them coming, and, since the ambulances are covered, we cannot see them until they are right on top of us."

I nodded, and she continued,

"I worry more about the wounded than I do about myself. They are helpless, and we have no way of protecting them. I have been lucky so far, but other ambulances have been hit."

We talked a few minutes longer, and, while we were sitting in the lobby, she pointed out several men and women wearing the medals of Hero of the Soviet Union and the Order of Lenin. A tall girl dressed in airforce uniform passed us, and my companion said,

“That girl pilots an ambulance plane. I have seen her several times at the front. Very serious cases are flown back to base hospitals for treatment; the planes save thousands of lives.”

A tank officer approached us and nodded to the girl. She said good-bye to me and walked away with him. Watching her stride across the lobby, I thought of the great changes that had taken place in the status of Russian women in the space of twenty years. With the exception of relatively few in the wealthy classes, they had been the most backward and illiterate women in Europe; their amazing development was one of the major credit items on the Soviet ledger. War had tested them before they had time to enjoy many of the fruits of their work, but their enthusiasm and vitality remained a hopeful sign for Russia's future. It is not unlikely that in the post-war years of reconstruction they will play an even bigger part in government and industry as they replace men who were killed and disabled on the battlefield. But, whatever lies ahead, they have amply proved their right to the “equality” which has been granted them.

CHAPTER XIII

MORALE

THE CONSTANT presence in Moscow of officers and privates wearing decorations might have led to the belief that these awards were freely bestowed and easily earned, but such was not the case. From the beginning of the war up to June 9, 1942, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was conferred upon only 242 persons. The total number of medals given to the armed forces up to that date was 117,982, although guerrilla fighters, who had also won decorations, were not included in the list. Some of the newly-created medals were indicative both of a nationalist trend and a resurgent interest in Russia's historical past. On May 20, 1942, for example, the Order of the Patriotic War of the first and second degrees was introduced, and, by the end of July, three new orders were created. They were the Order of Suvorov of the first, second and third degrees; and the Order of Kutuzov of the first and second degrees; and the Order of Alexander Nevsky. Nevsky was a thirteenth-century prince who defeated the invasion of the Swedes and the Teutonic Knights; Suvorov was the greatest general of Catherine the Great and fought against Prussians, Poles, Turks, and the French. Civilians were also decorated: composers, actors, painters, and sculptors were given the title of Distinguished Artist of the Soviet Union as a reward for outstanding merit. Workers were ambitious to become Stakhanovites, and, added to this incentive for greater production, there were monthly and annual "socialist competitions" in which factories and collective farms participated. The winning unit received a red banner and a money bonus.

The distinguishing feature of the medals, as contrasted with those of other countries, was the material advantages that accompanied them ranging from an outright gift of rubles to a free pass on the railroads. They were highly prized, but it was doubtful if a medal for bravery excited the same admiration among the population that a similar decoration would have done in England or America. The reason for this attitude was that the enormous Soviet casualties, the millions of Russian dead, had created a different sense of values. Were men killed in battle necessarily heroes? The immediate response was yes, and yet, if that were true, the term "hero" obviously needed a broad definition. What was a hero, and did a man have to be killed to prove he deserved the title? Governments have attempted to solve this problem by granting post-humous awards. The Russian people's sacrifices, and the losses and sufferings from which no Soviet citizen had escaped, made individual recognition of merit difficult. The soldiers, in the final analysis, asked only that their dependents be cared for, and that the future of their wives and children be safeguarded in the event they were killed. Insurance measures of this nature had been undertaken by the Soviets and by other belligerent governments to a greater extent than in any previous war.

I learned by accident of a side of the war about which little was said in the newspapers. During a visit to a hospital, I saw a three-months-old baby girl whose mother and father, the nurse told me, had been killed in an air-raid. I mentioned having seen the baby to Oscar Emma while we were working the next day. He showed immediate interest and said,

"I will call my wife right away. You see, we have no children of our own, and we have been wanting to adopt one for a long time."

"Well, you don't have to telephone her right now," I said. "The baby will be in the hospital for two or three more weeks."

"No," he insisted. "I'd better not delay. Lots of people are adopting babies."

"I'll go to the hospital with you this afternoon, and we can see her after she wakes up from her nap."

Oscar's wife was as interested as he was, but she had another appointment and could not go with us. We went out to the hospital on the subway, and Oscar talked excitedly about how anxious he and his wife were to adopt a child.

"We have been thinking about it for the last few years," he said, "and, with so many orphans being left by the war, we decided now was the time to do it."

Oscar and his wife were Ukrainians, and I asked him if he would prefer to take a Ukrainian child.

"No, Russian or Ukrainian would make no difference to us," he said. "We do not care so much about the child's nationality, but we want a girl."

"Why a girl?" I asked.

"Well, my wife and I are not as young as we once were, and a little girl would be a great pleasure to us; then too, the way the world is, I think girls have a better time."

The nurse in the children's ward remembered me, and I asked her if we could see the baby she had shown me the day before.

"Oh, she is gone," she said.

Oscar's face fell, and I said,

"But you told me she would be here for two or three weeks."

"I know; I thought so too," she explained, "but she was adopted. She has a very good home now and a new father and mother. Was there any special reason why you wanted to see her?"

"My friend was interested in adopting her."

"Oh, I see. Well, if you will come with me to the superintendent's office, you can fill out the forms, and we will put you on our

list. A nurse will come and see you when we have another baby who needs a home."

We went to the superintendent's office; Oscar was obviously deeply disappointed. From my description of the baby he had set his heart on having her. The superintendent told us that during the previous nine months more than 4,000 orphans had been adopted in Moscow alone. After we had left the hospital I said,

"I'm sorry you missed the baby, but I see now why you wanted to hurry. I had no idea so many children were being adopted."

"It is because thousands of men and women have lost their own families," he said. "They are lonesome, and they want to do something for children without a home. It was the same way during the last war."

The care of orphans, however, was only partially handled by adoption; the State had a definite program for the welfare of homeless children, and they had rigid standards for those wishing to adopt a child. Russia's socialized system was easily adapted to the problem, which, like so many others created by the war, involved mass dealing with the population. Voznesensky's third Five-Year Plan, by which Soviet national life had been guided until the German invasion, had not included blueprints for providing for thousands of orphans; it was not necessary, the machinery was already there. Nikolai Voznesensky, ten years younger than Lazar Kaganovich, was considered the latter's logical successor in heading Russian industrialization: he had foreseen, for example, that the care of children was an integral part of national productivity either in farm or factory. Workers knew that the future of their sons and daughters was assured, and this policy would inevitably be further justified when the children replaced their fathers and mothers on the work-bench. Meanwhile, soldiers at the front were assured that whatever happened their babies would

not starve, and this assurance was of inestimable value in maintaining Red Army morale.

Voznesensky, the youngest member of the State Defense Committee, was made chairman of the Soviet Planning Commission in 1938. A brilliant theorist, he lacked Kaganovich's administrative ability, but each compensated for the other's deficiencies, and they were regarded as Stalin's most useful home-front team. Kaganovich was essentially a "trouble shooter." He had been a Stalin supporter since the revolution, he was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and, consequently, he was not afraid to tackle tough jobs. Unlike most Soviet administrators, his personal position was so secure that he was not haunted by fear that in event of failure he would be arrested or executed. It was because of this that he had been given and had accepted the job of reorganizing the country's railroads. The Russians said he had succeeded so well that he had been promoted Commissar of Heavy Industry in 1937, but the Soviet railroads did not appear to American eyes as the product of anybody's "success." They were in poor condition. Voznesensky and Kaganovich did not have to worry about labor problems in considering their industrial tasks. The Soviets liked to use the terms connected with democracy: for example, they called the Supreme Soviet their "parliament," and they spoke of their labor organizations as "trade unions." But delegates to the Supreme Soviet were picked from one ticket, there was no opposition; and the votes on laws in their "parliament" were always unanimous. Their "trade unions" could not demand more wages; they could not organize a strike; and they could not perform any of the functions commonly associated with trade unions.

Leon Jouhaux and Sir Walter Citrine, secretaries of the French and British labor unions, were well aware of this situation, and

for years resisted Russian demands to be allowed to join the international federation of unions. The Soviet request appeared to be merely a communist attempt to gain a voice in international labor councils. Sir Walter Citrine, however, seems to have altered his attitude since the war; he visited Russia with a British labor delegation, and the Soviets returned the call by sending Klavdia Nikolaeva and Nikolai Shvernik to England. They spoke at factories all over Britain and were given tremendous ovations by the workers. Klavdia Nikolaeva was secretary of the Soviet Council of Trade Unions and was the only woman member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. She was an "old Bolshevik," having joined the party in 1909. Nikolai Shvernik, another "old Bolshevik," joined the party in 1905, and was Chairman of the Soviet Council of Trade Unions. He was a key figure in the revolution, heading the artillery workers' union, and was given his present post in 1930.

The war was such a terrible reality to the Soviet people that few of them ever considered abstractions such as the ultimate aims for which they were fighting. Germany had attacked them, they were defending themselves: this was the sum total of the meaning of the conflict to millions of Russians. They might have added that they were fighting to defend their homes, and their wives and children; in short, they were repelling a foreign invasion. But not many of the peasants and workers in the Red Army would have said they were fighting for "a way of life," or for the Four Freedoms, or to free the enslaved countries of Europe. The simple truth was that Russia would not have endured her tremendous casualties for anything less than a clear struggle of life and death. The people had only a hazy idea of the Nazi system of government (incidentally, it was never called Nazism but "German fascism" by the Soviet press) and they would not have favored an attack upon Germany to halt Hitler's annexation of smaller coun-

tries unless they understood clearly that these annexations ultimately menaced Russia. Thus, they were not different in this respect from the English and French. A Russian said to me one day,

“Do not forget, when you talk with such altruism, that America did not come in the war until Japan attacked her.”

It was the Soviet reply to my remark that Russia did not fight until she was invaded. I thought it was an appropriate time to discuss certain post-war questions which had been agitating people at home, and I asked,

“Will the Soviet Union keep the Baltic States after the war?”

“Yes, certainly,” he replied.

“How do you reconcile such action with the Atlantic Charter?”

“Because the Baltic States belong to us, and they have voted to become part of the Soviet Union.”

“Are you going to seize the Polish Ukraine?”

“I do not think either ‘seize’ or ‘Polish’ belong in your question. We are simply going to allow outside Ukraine to join with the Soviet Autonomous Ukrainian Republic. All Ukrainians have long wanted to be united in one state.”

“The Poles will resent it.”

“Nichevo,” he shrugged.

“And Bessarabia?” I asked.

“Well, you have been in Bessarabia. Were you not in Kishinev in 1939 when the Rumanians had it? You know the people speak Russian and have nothing in common with the Rumanians. Of course, we are going to take it.”

“I’m afraid there will be arguments at the peace table,” I said.

“That may be,” he replied. “But do you realize that the world has become very small? There will be only two great powers at that peace table you mention: Russia and America. England is no

longer a great power; her dominions are independent, and she would have collapsed early in the war but for American aid."

"I don't agree with your estimate of Britain," I said.

He smiled.

"You Americans talk that way when it suits your convenience. England is so dependent on America that she has become a virtual European outpost for you. You know that, but you intend to use Britain at this peace conference the same way that Lloyd George used the dominion representatives at the Versailles negotiations."

"How was that?" I asked.

"He brought them in as an extra weight when he wanted to gain a point. The other foreign delegates were always impressed, and he usually won. Now you want to continue the fiction of Britain being a great power so that you can use her voice to help gain your demands."

"Again, I don't agree with you at all about Britain," I argued. "But, even if it were true, America has no territorial ambitions. Our strength at the peace conference will be devoted to trying to arrange a lasting peace: that's our one aim. We expect support on that not only from Britain but from you Russians."

"I admit that, and you will get support," he said. "But you asked me a minute ago if the Soviet Union intended to keep the Baltic States. Therefore, there must be some question in your mind about it. Perhaps you will try to stop us from keeping them."

"No, if it's a question of force, we will do nothing about the Baltic States," I said. "But the principle is wrong. We cannot be fighting for freedom if we are willing to sacrifice small countries."

"Ah, you Americans!" he sighed. "When will you learn to be realistic?"

"We're realistic enough," I said. "We have plenty of people who can talk your kind of realism and would be glad to do so. But

that would lead to more wars. You want strong frontiers after the war and perhaps spheres of influence in other countries, don't you?"

"I think that would be wise," he answered.

"And a strong army and navy?" I continued.

"Yes. But why do you ask?"

"Because it is pertinent to what I am saying. Do you agree that sane international planning, general disarmament and the creation of a small world police force, would be better than strong frontiers and a big army and navy for every country?"

"Obviously."

"But you can't have that under a peace treaty that deprives certain small countries of their freedom. A treaty won't work unless it's just."

He made no comment, and I continued,

"You think we Americans are naïve. As a matter of fact, we're the most hard-headed kind of realists. You will admit that if we so desired, we could probably grab a big slice of world territory after this war?"

He nodded, and I said,

"But the truth is we don't want any more territory. Our sole aim is the creation of a lasting peace. It isn't that we are altruists; it is simply that your Litvinov was right when he said that 'peace is indivisible.' The world cannot remain at peace while part of it is at war. An American author, Ernest Hemingway, wrote a great novel about the Spanish war called 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' in which he expressed the same idea."

"I know. I have read it."

"What? Hemingway's book on the Spanish war?"

"Yes. A friend had a copy."

"What do you Russians think of Hemingway?"

"Well—"

"You mean you may not be ready to serialize his books in *Pravda*, but he's still a hell of a good writer."

"Something like that."

"I knew the Russian newspaperman who was down in Spain. I met him at one of Litvinov's parties at Spiridonovka. Later, he was in Czechoslovakia. Michael Kholtssoff."

"I know who you mean. Kholtssoff's in jail."

"Well, that was bound to happen sooner or later. Is the charge serious?"

"No. He will be released eventually. He might even work his way back; he just made a mistake."

"How was that?"

"When these *Pravda* correspondents went abroad they had too much power—especially in countries like Spain and Czechoslovakia where there was a strong Communist Party. Kholtssoff began to take himself too seriously; he had ideas of his own."

"And Uncle Joe is the only one who gets paid to have ideas around here."

"You must not say things like that. It is not funny. Comrade Stalin is—"

"I know, I know. Yaroslavsky summed it up the other day in the *Propagandist* when he said 'Comrade Stalin is our Party, our people, our banner, and our victory.' At that, he didn't say he was 'our dear father and our teacher.'"

"I know those phrases sound strange to you Americans, but it is natural to Russian ears."

"Why? Why this glorification of one man?"

"For hundreds of years the Czar was the 'little father'; the Bolsheviks took away both the Czar and the orthodox church. It was too radical a change. The people had to have some substitute. For a time, Lenin was the 'little father'; and, after him, Stalin took his place."

"I doubt if it's still necessary."

"That is because you persist in thinking of us as Europeans and applying European standards. Russia is Asiatic."

"I should have learned it by now; you certainly have Oriental ideas about human life."

"Our attitude is not indifference nor is it fatalism. How can I explain to you that the death of one hundred thousand men is not more important than the death of one man?"

"I accept the concept in principle but not in practice."

"That is because you are a Westerner. And Hitler, damn him, is a Westerner. He could not understand it either. We lost a million men in the early months of the war, then we lost another million men. Some countries would have capitulated, but we sent more millions into battle."

"I think I see what you mean; the very magnitude of your effort must have appalled the Germans. When they started taking losses themselves it frightened them; they realized they could never suffer your amount of casualties and still keep fighting."

"Well, it is partly that, and partly our determination that it is better to be dead than live in chains. Some other nations, like France, said the same thing, but, when it came to a test, they did not mean it. They surrendered."

The conversation had been useful to me in clearing up certain questions that were in my mind, and I was sure the Russian's answers represented the general Soviet viewpoint. He was not conscious that his ideas had been formed by twenty years of reading *Pravda* and *Izvestia* and being subjected to the heaviest kind of propaganda, but, because of this fact, his replies were apt to be identical with those his neighbors would have given. In New York or London, a newspaperman interviewing twenty people on a specific question would be liable to receive twenty different answers, but not in Moscow. The editorial writers quoted freely

from the speeches of Stalin and turned to his writings for guidance when in doubt on any point. Stalin's speeches were not only printed in all the papers and periodicals but also issued separately in millions of copies. An *Izvestia* editor wrote,

"We know: when the beloved voice of Stalin is heard over the radio it is always a guidance of the road. Always after a speech of his, things take their right places, and we know: a keen exacting intellect holds vigil over the country; a great man leads the country. After hearing Stalin's words the worker would begin his day, with greater determination; the scientist would sense in a new manner the nature of things in the world he was studying; the fighter of the Red Army defending the country would see his task in a new light."

Whatever the merits of concentrating so much power in one man, it simplified the task of correspondents and of students of Soviet politics. Something of an aura of mystery has been built around Stalin, but his speeches and public statements are masterpieces of clarity. There is no room for misunderstanding. A Soviet newspaperman in Washington trying to predict America's future course of action has to consider many factors: sectionalism, party politics, isolationism, the attitude of labor and capital, and even religion. But an American correspondent in Moscow turns to the compiled works of Stalin, and he usually finds the answer.

When I was transferred from Paris to Moscow in 1937, the contrast of the tangled crossweb of French politics with the singleness of the Russian political scene amazed me. Then I began to see a relation between the two systems: when democracy reaches the low ebb to which the Third Republic had fallen, dictatorship on the Stalin model is the inevitable next step. France and Russia were not so far apart; the body politic of France was as sick as that of Czarist Russia, and the cure was likely to be equally violent. The Soviets, and also the Germans, saw the situation

clearly; both helped speed the French collapse. I said to a Russian newspaperman,

"Do you think it is wise to allow the Communist Party to cause so much trouble in France? She is the only power left in Western Europe to check Germany."

"Republican France is finished," he said. "She died in 1934 with the Stavisky scandal. It is now only a question of who gains control, the Fascists or the Communists."

"Germany will get the only benefit," I said.

"Probably," he shrugged, "but we have to continue the fight. If we order Maurice Thorez to silence the Communist Party, the Fascists will take control."

"You think then there is no hope for democracy?" another newspaperman asked him.

"No, not in Europe."

"They call you Communists radicals," the correspondent said. "But I think you're really reactionaries. Neither you nor the Fascists esteem personal liberty. I wouldn't be surprised if, after the next war, the peace is signed at a sort of Congress of Vienna with Russia playing the same reactionary rôle as she did in 1815. That treaty killed liberalism in Europe for about forty years."

"Who knows?" he smiled.

The newspaperman's allusion in 1937 to the Congress of Vienna seemed much more apropos in 1943; he repeated it again when I saw him. Defeated Germany will undoubtedly find a Talleyrand to send to the conference, he said, just as France did in 1815, and Soviet Russia will want none of the revolutionary spirit that may flame in sections of Europe. The Four Freedoms of the Atlantic Charter were considered revolutionary two hundred years ago, and they are still the most revolutionary concepts in the world. Despotisms, such as Communism and Fascism, he added, are not new ideas, despite the radical economic changes that have accompanied

them. Organized Communist activities in other countries as distinguished from genuine revolutionary liberalism, will always be supported by the Soviets because of the Party's value as a political weapon.

I did not agree with the comparison; historical analogies, however glib, are rarely sound, but it started an interesting train of thought. The United States, I reasoned, would have a greater influence than Russia in shaping post-war trends in the world at large. The Soviet Union would be too exhausted and too busy trying to rebuild their own ruined economy to take a very active part. Neither reaction nor revolution would stem from Russia but from conditions in the individual countries; post-war governments would need American support, and their need would give us a preponderant voice in establishing genuine democracies. Our responsibility was not to encourage or support oppressive administrations. I said to my friend,

"I don't think the Congress of Vienna situation will be repeated. The Russians will cooperate with us in creating order in Europe, but it won't be a system forced upon the people against their will."

"I hope you're right, but we'll see," he said.

Allied doubts about Russia's post-war intentions were reciprocated by the Soviets; the suspicions raised by lack of a second front in 1942 could never be wholly erased. The Russians believed we waited until Germany was weakened before coming in for the final kill. Acrimonious discussions between British and American airlines concerning future control of airplane routes were noted without comment by the Russians. They felt that they were being used to fight the battles, and they were wary of high-sounding post-war plans that would leave them with only a ruined country and ten million dead while the other nations re-made the world map.

Certain American newspapers attacked any public figure who criticized the Soviet Union; they argued that the Allied nations must work together and such criticism was harmful. It was true that inter-Allied bickering could please no one but Goebbels; on the other hand, Britain and America had made great efforts to be friendly with the Russians, and few of their overtures had met with success. The Allied military attachés in Moscow were rarely allowed to go to the front, and there was little exchange of information. A Russian friend surprised me by remarking,

"There are too many misconceptions on both sides. You Americans, for example, think we should help you in your war against Japan; we do not feel any obligation to do so at all. We believe you should have invaded Europe last summer, but you probably do not think so."

"I agree with you regarding the misconceptions," I said. "There are obviously a great many of them. We were not in a position to invade Europe last summer. It would help our relations with each other if your government told the people the facts concerning why we did not invade."

"We have too many problems of our own to publish your difficulties as well. It would not interest any one."

"I think it might interest a great many people," I said. "As the situation stands now, the Russians believe we broke our promise to them. That is not true, and the impression should be corrected."

"What does it matter?" he asked.

"It will make a great deal of difference in our attitude toward each other after the war. Why should an impression like that be left unless there is a desire to create ill-will and suspicion?"

"You said you were not in a position to invade Europe last summer. Does that mean it was absolutely impossible?"

"Practically," I said.

"But there was a small chance of succeeding, about as much

chance as the Red Army at Stalingrad had of holding out, was there not?" he asked.

"The situation was not the same. If we had tried an invasion and failed, it would have been bad for our cause, and it would have ultimately been bad for Russia. By waiting, we were able to ship more supplies to the Soviet Union and to improve our own position so that the eventual invasion will be bound to succeed. We could not risk a failure."

"There is one of the misconceptions we have about each other," he said. "We believe you could have risked a failure. Any attempt would be better than none. That is why we cannot accept your explanation. I will always believe there should have been an invasion."

"And many Americans will always believe you should help us in our war against Japan," I said.

"What has your war against Japan got to do with us?" he asked.

"We are allies, and we are helping you fight Germany. Japan and Germany are allies."

"Japan and Germany may be allies, but Japan has not helped Hitler very much. She has not attacked us. We believe we are allied with you in fighting Germany, and up to now we have carried the largest burden. We have nothing to do with the war in the Pacific."

"It isn't as simple as that," I said. "This is a global war, and it is all part of the same struggle."

"You may be right, but, by defeating the Germans, we are doing our share and as much as can be expected of us."

He had clearly expressed the Soviet attitude, and it was one which the United Nations would have to accept. Nothing but a Japanese attack would ever change it.

CHAPTER XIV

AUTUMN 1942

"I'M SORRY. You'll have to go back to America for medical treatment."

These words by Captain John Waldron, the American Supply Mission physician, meant it would be impossible to remain in Russia for the duration of the war as I had planned. The Soviet doctors had told me the same thing, and there was no alternative. Both Waldron and the Kremlin Hospital physicians had warned me after my long illness following the cerebral hemorrhage that I would not be able to stand the winter in Moscow. Despite their advice, I wanted to make the attempt, but, when the cold weather came, I began to feel so ill that there were days when I could not work. I again consulted the doctors, and they confirmed their original conclusion that I would have to go home.

I cabled the editor of INS, Barry Faris, asking to be recalled, explaining to him that my health was so poor I would not be able to continue in Moscow. It was the first time in seven years of foreign assignments that I had not stayed on a job until it was finished. Faris immediately answered my cable saying he was making airplane reservations for me to come home by way of Iran, Cairo, and South America. Jack Oestreicher, INS Foreign Editor, wired that Bill Chaplin was coming up from India to take my place. Faris and Oestreicher had given me every consideration from the first day of my stay in the hospital.

Waldron advised me to go to the Mayo Clinic for a check-up.

"These cerebral hemorrhages are dangerous, and you couldn't stand many of them," he said. "The Mayo Clinic will go over you

from top to bottom, and they will be able to fix you up if anybody can."

Oscar did not appear surprised when I told him I was going home.

"I knew you would have to. You have been looking bad lately," he said. "I do not like to see you go, but it is the best thing for you. It is going to be pretty tough here."

"I know it's going to be tough," I said, "and that's one reason I hate to go. I feel as if I were deserting."

"Well, look at it this way. Suppose you got sick again and had to spend another month in the hospital. You would just be using the bed that would be needed by some Red Army soldier, and getting care and attention from doctors and nurses who are busy as hell already. Russia is no place for a sick man."

"I suppose you're right. I wish you could go to America with me. You look as if you could stand some medical attention yourself."

Oscar had been working hard, dividing his time between assisting Walter Kerr and me. He said,

"After you go, I am only going to work for Walter Kerr. It is too much trying to help two correspondents."

Anna, my messenger, came into the room, and I said,

"I'm going home in a few weeks, Anna. I may be able to get you another job with a correspondent if you wish. I didn't expect to be leaving so soon, but the doctors say I can't stay in Moscow."

"I am sorry you are going, Mr. Brown," she said. "But it will not be necessary to get me a job. I have found one myself; you may remember I told you I hoped to be able to get work in the theatre. It has been an interesting time for me, working for you. I had no idea that newspaper work was like this."

"It isn't like this anywhere except Moscow," I said. "There are a lot of things in Russia that are different from other countries."

The newspapermen were not surprised at my decision to return to America. Some openly envied me.

"I wish I could go home," said one. "I'd be willing to have two cerebral hemorrhages. But you're wise to leave; you've been looking like hell lately."

Leland Stowe, Walter Graebner, and Larry LeSueur were also returning to America, and Henry Cassidy said he expected to be given leave-of-absence soon. I talked with Stowe of making the trip with him, if our plane reservations were at the same dates. Leland had to be home at a definite date because he was scheduled to make a lecture tour; I had never heard him on the platform, but I thought he must be effective because, besides being a good speaker and an ace newspaperman, he was one of the few members of the profession who really looked like a foreign correspondent. His prematurely white hair, his wiry build, and earnest manner, were natural assets; Stowe had a good sense of humor and was popular with the other correspondents. I never heard him make a joke at anybody else's expense, and he was always ready to do a favor. In this respect, he was like his close friend, Ralph Barnes, who was one of the kindest newspapermen I have ever met. Leland was with Barnes the night before Ralph flew on his fatal bombing mission.

I went to the Press Department and notified Polganov that I was leaving. He promised to make reservations for me on Soviet planes to Kuybyshev and Teheran.

"We are moving our offices from the Metropole to the Foreign Office," he said, "and it would be difficult for you to walk back and forth two or three times a day."

One of the newspapermen suggested that Polganov was probably glad to be rid of me.

"I wouldn't doubt it," I said. "But, as a matter of fact, I cause him less trouble than most of you boys. I've given up trying to

argue stories through. If he blue-pencils anything in my cables I let it go unless he cuts too much. Then I don't send the cable at all."

"Polganov would be happy to get rid of us all," said another correspondent. "This job of handling the foreign press is a thankless proposition. He gets hell from us, and he gets hell from the government."

"He does all right," was another's opinion, "he'll probably end up as an ambassador. And then if he ever meets any of us he'll pretend he doesn't know us."

"I don't think so," I said. "Soviet diplomats are usually pretty cordial when they meet you abroad. They're not so chummy here in Moscow."

"The location of the Foreign Office has a dampening effect on them," remarked a correspondent. "Every time they look out the window they see Lubianka prison, and it makes them shudder."

The Foreign Office was diagonally across an open square from Lubianka; the prison had been the headquarters of a British insurance company before the revolution.

"I used to live near Lubianka," I said. "I had an apartment on Ulitza Markhlevskaya in 1938. Most of the other tenants in the building were policemen. I never had to worry about burglars."

"You were probably put there so they could keep an eye on you," said somebody.

"No, those were the good old days of the purge," I replied. "The policemen were so tired from arresting people that they had no time to bother with me when they came home."

"What do you think will happen here after the war?" asked a correspondent. "Do you think there will be more purges?"

"No," I said, "I think on the contrary that they will relax discipline and try to make it as easy as they can for the people. After

all, the Russians have suffered plenty already; another purge would be too much."

"Then you don't think there will be a need for a clean-up?"

"The purges were political affairs directed at the followers of Stalin's only two rivals, Trotsky and Bukharin. Now that they are both dead, I don't see the necessity for any further mass liquidation."

"Do you believe the people who were executed were guilty?"

"Not all of them, certainly, but some were guilty as hell. Trotsky was the leader of left-wing Communism, or internationalism; and Bukharin headed right-wing Communism. He was a moderate and wanted to make changes slowly. Both men had their followers, and they probably would have done anything to overthrow Stalin. It was Russia's fifth-column; the Soviets proved that they intrigued with the Japanese and the Germans."

"What do you think of the possibility of an army revolt?" asked some one.

"I doubt very much that it will happen," I said. "All the potentially disloyal officers were weeded out at the time of Tukhachevsky's execution. Of course, we don't know very much about the attitude of the army. There may be surprises. But the army leaders are so carefully selected that there is no one to head a revolt."

"There is no fifth-column today in Russia," remarked a correspondent.

"Stalin is more popular right now with the masses of people than he has ever been during the two decades that he has been in power," added another.

"But there are millions who have had relatives and friends arrested or executed," objected some one. "It can't be possible that they're loyal to Stalin; then too the country must be disturbed by these unbelievable war casualties. How can some of those people love Stalin?"

"It's a contradiction, but it's a fact that they do admire him," said a correspondent who had been in the Soviet Union for several years. "I long ago ceased trying to understand it, but I have talked with people who have had close friends executed, and they are tremendously loyal to Stalin. They bear him no resentment, although some of them have told me they believe their friends were innocent."

"I don't believe it," commented a newspaperman. "Human nature just isn't that way. They may have said those things to you because you were a foreigner, and they were afraid you would report them. But people don't forget their friends and relatives so easily."

"Well, whether through fear or love, Stalin has control of Russia, and he is going to remain head of the government."

Covering Russia was one of the few newspaper assignments where correspondents never became bored with their work. We often resented the tedium of life in Moscow and the restrictions on where we were allowed to travel, but the subject of the Soviet Union was one of constant fascination. Every newspaperman was subject to periodic fits of frustration at his inability to do real reporting: none of us had any illusions that our war coverage was anywhere near adequate. Yet the little we were able to learn stimulated our curiosity; we were stationed at the center of tremendous happenings, and we could only gather inklings of what was going on. One of the many paradoxes about Russia was that, although the rest of the world was hungry for news from the Soviet Union, there were only twenty foreign correspondents allowed in Moscow. Contrasted with the hundreds of newspapermen in London, and the scores who used to cover Paris, the Soviet capital had a thin representation. The fact was, of course, that the Russians preferred to disseminate their own news; there was less chance of "misunderstanding." Correspondents are more addicted

to "talking shop" than any other profession, but Moscow newspapermen suffered from this failing to an even greater degree than those in other countries. To some extent, it was the result of the aggravating difficulty of obtaining facts; we often pooled our information in an endeavor to arrive at the truth.

Oscar suggested we attend the opera before I left Moscow so I ordered tickets for Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin," which was being given at the Maly Theatre. It was an excellent performance, and, as always when I went to the theatre, I was impressed anew with the intense interest and enjoyment of the audience. The cultural level of the Muscovites was especially evident in forms of artistic expression which were free from the deadening hand of the Party Censor. Newspapers, Soviet literature, and the majority of new plays were so blatantly third-rate that the people turned wearily to the classics for relief. Opera and the ballet were alive, and they had an appreciative audience. There were forty theatres in Moscow before the war, and ten of them were still open; tickets were not expensive. Shakespeare was popular, and an American operetta, *Rose Marie*, always played to full houses. I attended a presentation of *Rose Marie* in Murmansk given by a travelling company for the entertainment of British and American merchant sailors. The men enjoyed the novelty of hearing the familiar tunes sung in Russian. One of the best features of the Soviet theatre was the thorough training given to children who wished to become actors or ballet-dancers; they entered theatrical schools at an early age and were required to have many years experience in minor parts before they were allowed to attempt a major rôle. The Russian balletomanes demanded perfection and were quick to notice faults, however slight.

After the theatre, Oscar and I went to the Moskva Hotel recreation room and played billiards for two hours. Most of the tables were taken by Red Army officers, playing in silence, with the same

intense concentration that they devoted to chess. The Russians liked games, and they took them seriously. There were no professional athletes in the U.S.S.R., and their skill in sports, except for soccer, was not on a level with that of other countries. Their soccer teams seemed as good as amateur clubs in Britain and France. The Dynamo sports federation in Moscow had a large outdoor and indoor stadium, swimming pools, and numerous tennis courts. The Soviet government wisely concentrated on developing sport for the masses rather than building up individual athletes; golf was unknown in Russia, but fishing and hunting were extremely popular.

When we had finished our game, we decided to walk around the Kremlin before returning to the Metropole. It was a moonlight night, and we noticed several couples sitting on the benches near the river; soldiers and girls strolled along the embankment. It was a familiar peace-time scene, and only the absence of the illuminated stars on the Kremlin towers made it different from other years. There was a poker game in session at the hotel, and I sat in for an hour until I felt sleepy and went to bed. I am a poor card player, not having a mathematical turn of mind, but I enjoy card games and have always envied good bridge players. The Russians, probably to prevent gambling, have prohibited the sale of cards in the Soviet Union.

The next day I went to the American embassy to have my passport renewed. I also called at the Persian ministry to obtain an entry visa to that country, but the ministry was closed; the doorman said the only Persian consulate was in Kuybyshev. I intended to stop over night in Kuybyshev on my way to Teheran, so I was not inconvenienced. While walking back to the hotel, I passed the offices of the Great Northern Sea Route and went in to look at the exhibits. They had collected the most complete data on polar flying of any airline in the world, and they kept their records up

to date. Their staff had been greatly decreased by the war, but they managed to maintain most of their former activities. I had been a daily caller at the Great Northern Sea Route offices in 1937 during the North Pole flights; it was greatly changed, and women were now in charge. The officers I had known were gone: Bearded Otto Schmidt was conducting scientific research in another institute, and plump, smiling Ivan Papanin was in charge of the vital ports of Murmansk and Archangel. Gromov and the other famous pilots were flying with the Red Air Force. A woman wearing a blue uniform with the medal of Order of the Red Banner was sitting at the information desk, and I asked her,

"Has the institution made any new polar discoveries since the war?"

"No, but we have continued our work on meteorological and weather conditions. There are not enough men available for exploration."

"Do you think that there will be regular trans-polar flying from Russia to the United States in a few years?"

"Yes. Without doubt. It will not be difficult. But our main task is to develop the arctic. So far we have just scratched the surface."

By developing the wealth of the arctic, Russia would undoubtedly become one of the richest countries in the world. Already it was known that the U.S.S.R. possessed twenty-one per cent of the world's coal reserves, fifty-five per cent of the world's oil fields, twenty per cent of the world's iron ore beds, and thirty-three per cent of the world's forest reserves. The eventual aim of the Great Northern Sea Route was to chart the arctic and catalogue the fabulous mineral deposits which were known to exist beneath the ice and snow. While mining in such a freezing climate would once have seemed impossible, it was now clear that arctic obstacles could be overcome and that the minerals could be mined and transported. The Soviet development of the Siberian cities of

Komsomolsk, Krasnoyarsk, and Novosibirsk was an example of the pioneering skill with which they were industrializing their country. The arctic remained as their last frontier, and the war had only delayed its development. The Great Northern Sea Route had attracted young Russians who combined love of adventure with scientific skill and ingenuity, and in peace-time its officers had always been a source of good material for newspapermen. There were usually stories of new discoveries or plans for more expeditions.

"Are you a pilot?" I asked the young woman.

"Yes. I used to be stationed at Murmansk as a relief pilot, but, since the war, I have been ferrying army planes. I am working here for a few months so that I can study."

"What are you studying?"

"Meteorology," she answered, "but I have not made much progress. I have had no time."

The seriousness with which education was regarded by Russian young people was constantly in evidence. Most of their studies were connected with their profession and were sponsored by the Commissariat for which they worked. Advanced studies in liberal arts were usually followed only by persons intending to become teachers.

"I would like to go to America and visit some of your universities," she said. "Perhaps I shall, after the war."

I doubted if the Soviets would let her travel to the United States; there had been a few students at Columbia University, but, in general, the Soviets did not favor the idea of exchange students. They did not want their people to have an opportunity to make comparisons with conditions in the outside world. The percentage of Russians whom the Soviets permitted to go outside the country was less than one per cent of the population. Even Americans who married Russian girls had great difficulty in

obtaining permission for them to leave the country, and, in some cases, the men had been forced to depart without their wives. I knew of one American who was working in a Russian factory fourteen hours a day at poor wages because he was unwilling to return to the United States without his wife. The government would not give her permission to go with him, and factory work was the only way in which he could earn his living.

There is some doubt whether the practice of exchanging students is any more productive of international good-will than sport contests like the Olympic Games. The example of Rhodes scholars is a case in point: the Americans who are selected are the best students from each state, and they are sometimes a little older than the other Oxford students. Not unnaturally, they usually excel in studies and sports, and this does not always please the English students. The Russian universities, lacking the traditionalism and conventionalism of older British and American universities, might have been expected to make great experimental strides, but Communist formalism handicapped them. The universities of medicine escaped the doctrinal burden of the liberal arts colleges, and their work had won world recognition. Burdenko in surgery, and Filatov in ophthalmology, as well as Orbeli and Stern in physiology, had contributed to establishing Russia's position in the forefront of socialized medicine. The war had not halted the research of the Academy of Science, rather it had doubled the academy's responsibilities as its members were now called upon to aid the war effort. Peter L. Kapitza, Nobel laureate physicist, was its most distinguished scientist.

I left the office of the Great Northern Sea Route, impressed with what I had seen, and returned to the Metropole. Jack Margolies, the desk clerk, was in the lobby. He gave a hacking cough as I passed and I asked him how he felt.

"Not so good," he said. "I've got a cold, and my heart has

been kicking back on me again. I dread the winter months ahead."

"How is your wife? Are you going to be able to bring her to Moscow?"

"I have done all I could, but it is difficult to get permission. They don't want to let people come to Moscow unless they have a good reason."

The manager of the hotel asked me if I would come into his office for a few minutes, and, when I entered, he said,

"The police have arrested the man who tried to steal your suit. They want to see you."

I was surprised. "All right. Which station shall I go to?"

He gave me the address, and I telephoned Oscar and asked him to go with me. I was the only witness to the attempted robbery and would have to identify the man and make the charge.

"Now don't get soft-hearted," warned Oscar. "This fellow tried to steal your suit, and you have got to testify against him."

We entered the police station, and I gave my name to the officer at the desk.

"Oh yes," he said, "the captain is expecting you."

He got up and went into another room, returning almost immediately and said,

"Please follow me."

He ushered me into a plain room containing four chairs, a desk and a table. A policeman in uniform who was obviously the captain rose and shook hands with me. He was completely bald, and even the little fringe around the crown of his head had been shaved, leaving only a bluish trace. He offered me a papyrus, the long Russian cigarette with a paper holder. I took one, and he said,

"We have arrested the man who tried to steal your suit. He has confessed, and it is now a matter of identifying him."

He rubbed his hands together and looked at me with expressionless black eyes.

"He is being brought in," he added.

There was a moment's silence, and then there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," called the captain, putting his cigarette in the ash tray. Two policemen entered escorting a man who was white with terror. He trembled so that he could hardly stand up. But it was not the man who had tried to steal my suit. The captain looked at me expectantly, and I said,

"I have never seen this man before."

The captain frowned.

"Are you sure? Remember you had been very ill, and you were only recovering. Is there any resemblance?"

"No. I am sure," I said, "and there is no resemblance. I gave the description to the hotel manager. You must have it. I said the man was tall and had black hair. This man is dark, it is true, but he is much shorter, and has a heavier build."

The captain looked at a pile of papers on his desk.

"Yes, we have your description of the robber, but of course, you were excited at the time and might not have remembered exactly what he looked like."

He drummed on his desk with his pencil.

"There is something very strange here. The man has confessed to robbing a room at the Metropole Hotel, and when we searched his house we found, among other things, an English coat. Do you know any correspondent who has lost an English coat?"

"I haven't heard of any one, but I suggest you call the manager of the Metropole and ask him if such a loss has been reported to him."

"I will do it immediately," said the captain and picked up the

telephone. We had been talking in English, which the captain spoke very well, and the prisoner looked at me hopefully. He evidently was relieved that I had not accused him, but he was still worried concerning what was going to happen.

The captain finished his conversation and turned to me. He had a satisfied air.

"The manager reports that an English coat was stolen from a newspaperman three weeks ago. The correspondent will come to the station and identify the coat tomorrow morning."

"Do you mind telling me who it is?" I asked.

"Not at all," he said, glancing at the slip of paper on which he had written it down. "This is his name."

He handed me the paper. It had a newspaperman's name on it and I said,

"I know him. May I see the coat? I think his initials will be in the lining."

"Of course. I will have it brought in," said the captain. "Take him back to his cell," he ordered the policeman escorting the prisoner. The man gave me a dejected glance and marched off with his captors. I never saw him again.

An orderly entered carrying an overcoat, and I recognized it immediately as one which my friend usually wore. I examined the inside lining and found his initials which I showed to the captain.

"I have seen him wearing the coat, but these initials settle it. He will identify it tomorrow."

The captain leaned back in his chair.

"Well, that is good," he said. "We have at least arrested a culprit, but I am sorry to have caused you the inconvenience of coming down here for no reason."

"It was no bother at all. I think you are to be congratulated on your good work. I won't be able to help you identify the other thief if you catch him, because I am going home."

The captain looked up.

"Home?" he said. "Where is your home? Are you English or American?"

"American. My home is in New York City."

He lighted another cigarette, extending the box to me, but I refused.

"And what do you think of our country?" he asked.

"I like it. I like Russia better than any other country in Europe. But I don't like your political system."

He laughed.

"Well, you are honest. Why don't you like our political system, as you call it?"

"I've been used to freedom in the country where I come from. The absence of personal freedom is what I dislike in your country, rather than your economic system."

"Is there anything else your dislike?"

"I don't sympathize with the way in which you are governed. But again it comes down to that word 'freedom.' You have subscribed to the Four Freedoms of the Atlantic Charter, but the only one which you have in Russia is freedom from want. You don't have freedom of speech, of religion, or freedom from fear."

He had been listening intently, and he took out a handkerchief and wiped his forehead.

"I understand you. I have had three sons killed in this war, and they all wanted to fight, and die if necessary. My father was a street cleaner in Moscow; now I am a captain of police. My sons could read and write; they had good educations. Lenin and Stalin have given us much to fight for. We are fighting to defend our homeland and our privileges."

An orderly came in with a message for the captain.

"I must go now," said the captain, walking to the door with me. "Thank you again for coming, and good night and good luck."

CHAPTER XV

THE TIDE TURNS

MARSHAL SHAPOSHNIKOFF launched the Red Army counterattack early in November, 1942. It was primarily intended to relieve Stalingrad, but it resulted in an unbroken series of Russian victories as the Soviets swept across the Don steppes beyond Rostov and Kharkov. The winter of 1942-43 will long be remembered in the U.S.S.R. for glorious successes on the battlefield and untold suffering at home. Fortunately for the civilian population, the weather was milder than other years and only on three or four occasions was the temperature lower than twenty-five or thirty degrees below zero. But food, clothing, and heat were scarcer than they had been at any time since the revolution. The Moscow gas supply was low, and people kept warm mainly by burning the wood which women and girls had cut during the previous summer. The central lighting plant cut off the electricity in various areas of the city for several hours a day in order to conserve coal and power for factories and other vital war purposes.

Stalin meanwhile altered his long-standing policy of requesting only war material under the Lease-Lend agreement, and several shiploads of American food arrived for the army early in 1943.

Shaposhnikoff's plans, although hampered by many complications, were finally implemented by young Gen. Konstantin Rokossovsky with clock-work precision. Faulty railroad communications had delayed the offensive for many weeks as the relief army waited at Saratov for supplies from the interior.

The Soviets were undecided in October whether to attempt to relieve Lieutenant-General Chuikov's hard-pressed Stalingrad gar-

risson, but Shaposhnikoff wanted to wait for more equipment. There were two reasons for his decision: the arrival of each train-load of war material increased his chances of success, and his army was growing so formidable that there was bound to be an element of surprise in the strength of the Russian attack. Two prongs of Rokossovsky's army drove southwest, hitting the northern circle of the Don while a weaker Soviet force pressed northwest towards Tsimlyansk on the southern arc. The initial engagements northeast of Kleitskaya quickly convinced the Germans of the overwhelming Red Army strength, and they began to retreat, leaving Marshal von Paulus with 300,000 men to continue the siege of Stalingrad. It was clear that von Paulus would be cut off, but it was reasoned that his army could prevent the Soviets using either the Stalingrad railway or the Volga River, both transport arteries urgently needed by the Russians, and his troops could engage large Soviet forces while the main German armies were carrying out their retreat.

Hitler rewarded von Paulus for maintaining his suicidal position by promoting him from general to field-marshal, but the Rumanian and Hungarian generals with him were simply ordered to continue the siege. They were not given medals. The Italians apparently were still treated with more consideration by the Germans than were their Balkan allies because the Italian Eighth Army was allowed to retreat from the hopeless Stalingrad position. It did not save them, however, for in the second half of December, during the Russian Middle Don offensive, the Italians suffered a crushing defeat at Meshkov. The Thirty-Fifth Army Corps and the Second Army Corps were routed, and, within a few days, many thousands were captured, 22,000 killed and 12,000 wounded. An article in *Red Star*, the army newspaper, estimated in March the total Italian losses on the Soviet front at 175,000, of whom 60,000 were killed, 69,000 wounded and 46,000 taken prisoner. At

the beginning of the war, the Italians had sent three veteran divisions of the Greek campaign, and their losses were believed to have been about 50,000 men up to the winter of 1941. In August, 1942, six new divisions joined the Eighth Army, and in October and November, each division received reinforcements of 4,000 to 5,000 men. Early in December Italian losses were estimated at 80,000 of which 35,000 were prisoners.

At the beginning of January, 1943, the Italian Eighth Army consisted of one Alpine corps of three divisions and one reserve infantry division. Between January fourteenth and twenty-third, these troops were surrounded and defeated. Among the captured were Umberto Regenia, Gen. Emilio Battisti, and Gen. Ettelvoldi Pascalini. The Spanish Blue Division under Gen. Augustin Munoz Grande fared better than any of Hitler's other satellite troops. Incorporated into the German army as the 250th Wehrmacht Division, they fought in the north on the Lake Ilmen sector where they lost about 7,000 men. Gen. Munoz Grande was called home by Franco early in 1943 to become head of Spain's military cabinet. The Russians did not have any special hatred of the non-German enemy troops, but instead made great propaganda efforts through leaflets and other means to wean them away from the Nazis.

While Lieutenant-General Chuikov was hammering von Paulus' isolated army on the steppes in front of Stalingrad, Rokossovsky's fresh troops were driving across the snow-swept Middle Don towards Rostov. The retreating German divisions fought a rear-guard action to enable their troops in the Caucasus to effect a junction with them at Rostov. Most of the Nazi divisions between Salk and Kropotkin were able to reach Rostov before their escape was cut off, but the Germans at Maikop and Georgievsk fled to Novorossisk and from there marched north and were ferried across to the Kerch Peninsula. The Russians had lost Rostov

once, recaptured it and lost it once more, and they entered the ruins of that once-beautiful city vowing never to surrender again. Von Paulus' troops, starving and frozen, capitulated to the Red Army, freeing the Soviets from menace on their rear and their southern flank as they pressed forward from Rossosh and Millerovo towards Kharkov. Meanwhile, at Stalingrad, Russian engineers were picking their way through mines and corpses that littered the ruined city. The tractor plant, one of the biggest in the world, had been completely destroyed; 14,000 houses had been razed by shells or by fire. Only the foundations were left on which to rebuild the city.

The Kremlin announced that Marshal von Paulus would be tried for his crimes against the Ukrainian civilian population. This development was disturbing to the British; the Russians seemed to have the intention of giving von Paulus a trial and executing him. They had already asked the British to try Rudolph Hess, but England feared German retaliation towards Allied prisoners if this were done. Nazi treatment of captured Red Army soldiers was already so brutal that nothing worse could be imagined. The Germans at Stalingrad herded thousands of Russians into fenced enclosures on open steppes and left them without shelter; hundreds died of cold and starvation. The Soviet announcement, however, underlined a fundamental difference between Russian and Anglo-American policy: the Red Army would execute Hitler, Goering, Goebbels and the other Nazi leaders if given the opportunity. Britain and America, on the other hand, would probably be content with exiling or imprisoning the Germans most responsible for Nazi crimes. A Russian invasion of Germany was dreaded in some Allied quarters because of the tremendous spread of Communism that would result. Against this danger was the salutary fact that even a temporary Soviet occupation of Germany might result in keeping the peace of

Europe for fifty years. Germany would be long in recovering from even a few weeks of the Red Army's presence. Witnesses of the Russian entrance into the once-prosperous Baltic States told me that three days after the Soviet arrival the little countries looked as though a swarm of locusts had gone through them. There was no looting or stealing, but the Russians bought every conceivable object in sight with their roubles, which the merchants had to accept. There was also wholesale liquidation of "enemies of the people"; this treatment might solve the German problem, and, in the long run, might be more effective than schemes for moral rehabilitation.

Joy in the Stalingrad victory was soon increased by the national elation which followed the Red Army relief of Leningrad. The former Czarist capital city had been under terrible siege for over a year; the story of the people's privation has not yet been adequately written and may not be until after the war. Yet the saga of Leningrad has already been expressed in music, Shostakovitch's unforgettable symphony, composed by the near-sighted artist between air raids while he was serving as an auxiliary fireman. Torn with self-doubts concerning his ability before the war, Shostakovitch drew inspiration from the sublime courage and self-sacrifice of his fellow defenders and composed a symphony that must rank with the best work of Prokofief. The Soviets claim it as outstanding among the music that has come out of Russia since the revolution. But, if the artistic triumph of Leningrad goes to Shostakovitch, the military award must be given to General Zhukoff for breaking the blockade.

General Zhukoff, promoted by Stalin to position of first assistant to Marshal Shaposhnikoff, was virtually second in command of the Red Army. A brilliant military tactician, tough and ruthless, he was trusted implicitly by the Kremlin. For this reason, he was given the task closest to Stalin's heart: breaking the siege of Lenin-

grad, and was granted all the war material and troops he requested for the job. It was a nut-cracking assignment, and, although Zhukoff suffered heavy casualties, he drove through the Nazi lines to the city. Stalin's judgment of men was again justified; he had placed youthful, 37-year-old Lieutenant-General Chuikov in command at Stalingrad, a job that required courage and staying-power but less strategic ability. And he called on skillful veteran Zhukoff for a task that required more than fanatical bravery and patriotism; both men succeeded beyond expectation. On the 700-mile front between Leningrad and Orel, Stalin gave Marshal Semyon Timoshenko a chance to redeem himself for his part in Rostov's premature fall in July, 1942. Timoshenko grouped his forces in front of the Demyansk swamps south of Lake Ilmen, and, during the late winter, smashed through the frozen bogs to a position where he was able to threaten Staraya Russa. It was a noteworthy victory for the Bessarabian marshal because the Demyansk swamps were considered impassable and had served the Germans for eighteen months as a natural barrier.

The story of Leningrad, however, has one other postscript which may be remembered long after the military records have been forgotten: the rise of a new Soviet leader. It established Andre Zhdanoff, the mayor of the city, as the second most important political figure in the U.S.S.R. and the likely successor to Joseph Stalin. Zhdanoff, a member of the 12-man inner cabinet, or Politburo, as it is called, succeeded Kiroff as head of the People's Commissariat after the latter was assassinated in 1934. The death of Kiroff, who was a close friend of Stalin, deeply disturbed the Soviet leader, and it marked the beginning of the nation-wide purges which were carried out for four successive years by his police chiefs, Yagoda, Yezhoff, and Berea. Zhdanoff is pure Russian—unlike certain other members of the Politburo, he is not Ukrainian, nor Georgian, nor Jewish—and he is popular with the

army. He is a nationalist like Stalin and has taken little interest in the work of the Third International. His closest rivals for succession to Stalin's position are Molotov and Marshal Voroshilov. Molotov is a poor speaker (he stutters), and he has a colorless personality; Marshal Voroshilov is not politically ambitious. And Stalin favors Zhdanoff; this, in the final analysis, is probably the most important factor in estimating the Leningrad Commissar's chances. There will be little change in Soviet policy if Zhdanoff ever becomes premier; his admiration for Stalin has revealed itself in constant imitation of the iron reserve of the Georgian leader. He maintained discipline even in the dark days when Leningrad's inhabitants were so hungry and desperate that grim stories of starvation were heard in Moscow.

Rokossovsky's southwestern armies smashed ahead capturing Kursk and Kharkov, and, on the central front, the Soviets made their most important gain in fourteen months by taking Rzhev. This city was the main Nazi forward hedgehog protecting the Germans in north and central Russia. Following up this victory, the Red Army drove southeast towards Vyazma with the ultimate object of converging on Smolensk. Spring thaws, creating rivers of mud, and the arrival of German reinforcements slowed Rokossovsky's southern advance until his divisions were completely halted along a 155-mile front in the middle and upper Donetz River regions. The extended Soviet lines of communication and inadequate transportation increased Red Army difficulties; the Russians were forced to retreat to the suburbs of Kharkov and, finally, after a heavy battle, they evacuated the city entirely. It was a discouraging reverse for the weary Soviet troops.

Victories in the field stimulated Red Army morale during the winter of 1942-43, but the population at home could only gain comfort by reading of these successes. Reality for them represented long hours of work, poor food, worn-out clothing, and

numbing cold. Women came home from factories facing cheerless evenings thinking of dead or missing husbands and sons. There was little laughter on the streets; the faces of men and women seemed pinched and somber, and many showed signs of malnutrition.

For these reasons the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa meant little to them; it was a remote event that seemed to have little bearing on their problems. Stalin wrote a reply to a letter from Henry Cassidy in which the correspondent had asked him his opinion of the invasion: Stalin indicated he approved of it, but his praise was lukewarm. The North African landing was a constructive Allied move, a necessary preliminary to an attack on the European continent, but it had small effect on the Soviet-German war. The Russians said it had no effect; the Allies, on the other hand, claimed it forced the Nazis to withdraw certain divisions from the Soviet Union and transfer them to Western Europe. The Roosevelt-Churchill invitation for Stalin to confer with them at Casablanca or Cairo was unwise and betrayed a fundamental misunderstanding of the Soviet position. The refusal was bound to come, and it did come: Stalin was too busy "fighting the war" (sic). He had no time for words, he wanted action. It was obvious, of course, that if he were really too busy he could have sent Molotov.

There were three reasons for his refusal, and Churchill, after his unpleasant Moscow trip, must have been aware of them. First, the intense Soviet bitterness because they were fighting alone in Europe; second, their single-mindedness about the conflict: their one aim was to drive the Germans out of Russia, and they had no desire for discussion of the global aspects which interested Britain and America; third, Stalin's inherent distaste for such dramatic gestures. But there was much, after all, that could not be discussed through the medium of the ordinary diplomatic

channels. Churchill may have hoped that the presence of President Roosevelt would cause Stalin to accept the invitation. The President cannot be blamed for trying for a personal meeting with Stalin to learn his views on the war and post-war problems; the United States has a legitimate right to know these things. But it is regrettable that Roosevelt did not wait until the Americans had a foothold in Europe; Stalin might then be more willing for discussion.

It has been suggested that Stalin was unwilling to go to North Africa for fear of offending Japan. This statement is illogical in view of Molotov's trip to Washington and London. Soviet-Japanese relations were in a state of armed truce: border disputes had been raging for many years. Russia was too exhausted fighting Germany to desire a war with Japan, and a conflict could only begin if Tokyo decided to attack Siberia. In that event, the Red Army Far Eastern commander, General Stern, would have to do the best he could with his limited forces, and there was a strong likelihood that the Russians would be unable to hold Vladivostok, their valuable Pacific port. A well-known American commentator said after the Churchill-Roosevelt Casablanca meeting:

"Because of Stalin's absence the biggest question facing America remains unanswered. Will the United States get bases in Siberia to strike at the heart of Japan? If so, when?"

I discussed this privately with a Russian official, and he stated, "Stalin did not have to go to North Africa to answer that question. Britain and America will get bases in Siberia if and when Japan attacks us, and not before."

"Is that the official attitude?" I asked.

"I believe it is," he replied, "but, even assuming that we turned over Vladivostok to the Americans, have the Allies enough strength to hold the city against a Japanese land and sea attack? I do not think the Americans and British have enough troops

in the whole Pacific area to repel a Japanese land invasion of Siberia from Manchuria. Thus, by granting Far Eastern air bases to the Allies, we would simply be inviting an attack which we would have to resist alone."

"I think you under-estimate the aid which we could give you," I said.

"Perhaps. But, even if Anglo-American bombers could fly over Japan for a few weeks, these offensives would cease if the Japanese captured the Siberian bases. The risk at present is greater than the possible gain."

The question of Russia's attitude towards Japan is one of the few cases where it may be accurately said that "time is on our side." The longer Japan delays her ultimate war with Russia the stronger will America become in the Pacific. There may be an unnatural period of peace between Japan and Russia, as there was between Germany and Russia during the Hitler-Stalin pact, but the clash will come sooner or later. As Soviet foreign experts realistically point out, there is a conflict of interests between the two countries.

I joked with a Russian friend one day about this, saying,

"I'm surprised that the Soviets recognize conflict of national interests as a cause of war. I thought that was a sin of bourgeois, profit-seeking countries."

He smiled,

"Our neighbors start the wars; we don't. Seriously, though, there would be no wars if the other nations of the world adopted our social system."

I couldn't resist a dig, and said,

"But you occupied Latvia, Lithuania, and Esthonia because you thought it was in your national interest to do so. That was one war you started."

He was a little offended and said stiffly,

"The people of those countries voted to become part of the Soviet Union."

"That may be," I said, "but I think countries remain just as nationalistic whether they have a socialist or capitalist form of government. You know that Red Army privates do not say they are fighting for socialism, world peace, or the rights of small nations—they say they are fighting for the Fatherland. All the Soviet newspapers call it the Fatherland war."

It was not a worthwhile discussion because my Russian friend's mind was already made up. There was no evidence that socialism was a cure for wars or that it would end imperialism. Turkey's fear of the old Russian dream of seizing Constantinople and dominating the Black Sea had been more acute in the past ten years than it had been during the reign of Czar Nicholas II.

Stalin signed a Red Army "Order of the Day" on February 23, 1943, stating that "in view of the absence of a second front in Europe the Red Army alone is bearing the whole weight of the war." Throughout his message, Stalin emphasized that Russia was depending on her own resources; there was no mention of Anglo-American war material. The Soviets were winning victories on every front at the time of his statement, but the message nevertheless made the Russian people feel betrayed by their Allies. Roosevelt and Churchill must have felt that Stalin was a difficult colleague. It was not expected that the Soviet premier would give undue prominence to Anglo-American material assistance, but his failure to mention it at all seemed deliberate. There was nothing either Roosevelt or Churchill could say without disrupting Allied harmony, but newspapermen in Russia wished Britain and America had a spokesman who would adopt the same frank attitude as that of the Soviets.

The desire of the Moscow correspondents for a frank Anglo-

American reply was suddenly granted by the United States ambassador, Admiral Standley. The blunt-speaking former Chief of United States Naval Operations told newspapermen that facts of important American aid were being kept from the Russian people. He implied that the Russian authorities sought to give the impression that the Soviet Union was fighting the war entirely alone. He made it clear that Russia was reluctant to exchange information on conduct of the war, and suggested that unless Congress felt it was helping Russia the American legislative body would be inclined to hesitate before it passed the pending Lend-Lease extension bill.

"It is not fair to mislead Americans into giving millions from their pockets, thinking that they are aiding the Russian people, without the Russian people knowing about it," the ambassador said.

Admiral Standley made his statement when he was asked about the fact that British and American, but not Russian, newspapers had published an acknowledgment by the Russian Red Cross of American aid.

"Well, there is no question that people in America know the facts and that here the people don't," he asserted. "Ever since I have been here I have been carefully looking for recognition by the Russian press of the fact that they are getting material help through America, not only through lend-lease but through the Red Cross and the Russian-American Relief. And I have yet failed to find any acknowledgment of that."

Asked whether there had been any progress in the exchange of information between the Russian and United States governments, Admiral Standley said there had been no noticeable change in Russia's attitude: her conduct of the war was still a matter of secrecy.

When asked why he thought the Russian authorities were not informing their people regarding the aid received, the ambassador said,

"They seem to be trying to create the impression at home as well as abroad that they are fighting the war alone.

"There appears to be a desire on the part of the Russians to create the impression that they are fighting the war with their own resources rather than acknowledge help from any one. The American Congress is rather sensitive. It is generous and big-hearted as long as it feels that it is helping some one. But give it the idea that it is not helping and it might be a different story."

The Soviet censors, reading Standley's interview, were disturbed; they pointed out that lend-lease figures had been published a few weeks before in *Izvestia*. It was true that the Stettinius report of February 1, 1943, had appeared in a Tass dispatch from Washington. It had been carried on page four without comment. The figures totalled \$1,300,000,000 and included such items as 2,600 planes and 3,200 tanks. Britain, too, had sent large quantities of war material, enough for the initial equipment of thirty-two armored divisions in tanks and four hundred squadrons in aircraft.

Admiral Standley's statement created international excitement; Sumner Welles announced that the ambassador had spoken without consulting the State Department. Many British and American public figures deplored the Admiral's "tactlessness"; President Roosevelt refused to comment. Some correspondents thought the President might know more about Standley's interview than he cared to say. They reasoned that Roosevelt must have been annoyed by Stalin's assertion that "the Red Army alone is bearing the whole weight of the war," and by his refusal to attend the North African conference. But I think it was

more likely that Standley himself was irked by the Soviet attitude.

The only light touch during the uproar was provided by a New York newspaper which interviewed Maurice Hindus and asked him what he thought of the admiral's statement. Maurice said it was "just irritation." But, intentionally or otherwise, the newspaper quoted Hindus as saying it was "a just irritation," thereby putting the likable Maurice in the rôle of critic of the Soviet Union.

There was a movie at the ambassador's residence, Spaso House, a week later. The Kremlin had reacted quickly to world comment, and Standley was pleased with the results of his interview. A mass of lend-lease news had been published in the Moscow newspapers as well as stories on Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's visit to Washington, American raids on the Japanese in the Aleutians and Allied bombings of Germany and Italy. The Russian ambassador in Washington, Maxim Litvinov, had publicly acknowledged the important part the United States planes were playing in Soviet offensives. The immediate disavowal of Standley's remarks by the State Department was lengthily discussed by the correspondents.

"It was probably necessary to do so from a diplomatic point of view," said a newspaperman, "but this affair goes a lot deeper than merely American desire to hear the Russians say 'thank you.'"

"Yes," remarked another, "our government wants the Russian people to know we are helping them; it would be dangerous for us in the long run if they felt they were fighting the war alone. We don't want them to come to the peace table in a resentful frame of mind. And, although it is not necessary for them to have a sense of obligation towards us, they should regard us as partners."

"There is another thing," added a correspondent. "If they are repeatedly told they are fighting alone, some might get discouraged and start thinking of a separate peace."

"This incident will be forgotten when we invade Europe," I said, "but it's a good thing for the Russian people to know we are helping them."

A correspondent came into the room with a mimeographed radio-news report.

"Listen to this," he said, "Bill Bullitt is giving some good advice at home. He says the United States better start acting now if we want our kind of peace after the war, or else Joe Stalin will make the decisions for us."

"What else does he say?" some one asked. The newspapermen were interested in the story because Bullitt had been the first American envoy to the Soviet Union after recognition in 1934.

"He says that at the present time American power is comparable to Wilson's power in the summer of 1918. But the day that Germany collapses we shall still have on our hands a war with Japan—a hard war which may be long—and the Soviet Union will be at peace and we shall want Soviet support against Japan.

"Under those circumstances," he read on, "we are likely to find ourselves as impotent as Wilson was in the spring of 1919. The real bargaining power will be in the hands of Stalin."

"Bullitt is about right," remarked a correspondent, "except that I don't agree with his conclusion. He says we have the power now, and, while we have it we must use it, or lose the peace. We damn well don't have the power now. If we had it, Stalin would have gone to North Africa. It's not like the last war; the Russians know we're in this up to our necks and have to help them for our own good."

"Bullitt has some remarks here that might interest President

Roosevelt. He says that in the spring of 1919 Wilson suddenly faced the fact that his power was gone. He saw the truth that his power had sprung not from his moral authority as he had believed, but from the power of the United States to supply the desperate physical needs of the Allies—and that since those needs were no longer desperate his hour had passed.”

“I think we’ll be a little more hard-headed this time,” said a newspaperman. “We’ll have a huge army, navy, and air force at the end of the war, and they’ll have to listen to us at the peace table.”

The Standley and Bullitt statements made sense to the correspondents, but nobody could understand what Vice-President Wallace meant when he said the Allies must not “double-cross” Russia.

“He probably doesn’t know himself,” said a correspondent. “He’s another one that’s been bitten by this international bug that seems to be floating around Washington. They say he’s very well-read, but you can’t become an expert on international relations by reading books.”

“The friction among the Allies this winter will straighten itself out,” I said, “but the old questions will come up again after the war. It may not be a bad development to have them aired while the fighting is still in progress. Russia’s attitude is pretty clear, and it will be less of a shock to our people later if we know now what she thinks.”

“What would you say her attitude will be?” asked a newspaperman.

“I think there is no doubt the second front is coming in the summer of 1943, but, even if we defeat Germany within a year, the Soviet Union will always feel that she bore the brunt of the land fighting and that the victory was really hers.”

“Yes, I believe you’re right,” said a correspondent. “I always

believed the British beat Napoleon until I came to Russia and heard their side of the story. They say Wellington just finished him off after Kutuzov had done the real work."

The importance of Russian victories during the winter of 1942-43 depends on the extent of German losses. The recapture of territory must have less bearing on the future than the loss of Nazi military effectives. German withdrawals were carried out in many cases so swiftly that there was little fighting, but, even considering this factor, competent military observers believe the Germans lost 800,000 men in killed, captured, and disabled. With the Allied landing in North Africa, and Soviet advances on every section of the Russian front, the period from November, 1942, to March, 1943, was clearly favorable to the United Nations. There is, on the other hand, some evidence to indicate the Axis powers were using the time to reorganize their forces and gather their strength for the final test that lay ahead. This remains to be seen.

CHAPTER XVI

TEHERAN

OSCAR EMMA rode out to the airport with me the morning I was leaving. Neither of us talked much; we were sure we would never see each other again. Our long association, beginning in 1937, was at an end. The doctor had warned Oscar a few months earlier that he had a bad lung; he looked thin and run-down. The muscles of his face sagged, and I noticed he had not shaved. He needed good food and special medicine, but neither was available in Moscow. He kept going on nerves and will-power, and the strain was showing. We drove up to the airdrome station, and after I paid the taxi-driver, Oscar and I went into the waiting-room.

"When you see Bill Stoneman give him my regards," he said.

"I'll do that, Oscar. Bill will be glad to hear from you. He always asks about you when I see him."

He looked out the window and continued,

"Let's see: there are others. Give my best to Demaree Bess and to Harold Denny. If Ralph Barnes were alive I would especially want to be remembered to him. There will never be another like Ralph."

"No, Ralph was in a class by himself."

We talked while the porters were weighing my luggage; there was a lot I wanted to say. Oscar was sick; we both understood clearly what was ahead, and there was nothing either of us could do to change it. There was no way I could help him after I left Russia. He was in some respects a little better off than millions of people in the Soviet Union. He had a job with short hours, and a

place to eat and sleep; against this was the fact that his health was gone and he should have been in a sanatorium. He had always been intensely loyal to me, and I couldn't rationalize his position by comparing it with that of others. No matter how I tried to think of it, I felt bad at leaving him, and I knew he hated to see me go.

"Take care of yourself. Don't forget you damn near died last summer," Oscar said. "Go to that Mayo Clinic and get straightened out."

"Sure. You don't need to worry about me," I said.

We walked out to the field where the plane was already half-filled with passengers; the pilot was warming up the motors, and an attendant looked at my tickets.

"Well, I guess this is it," I said to Oscar, shaking hands with him. "Good luck."

"Good luck," he said, and, as I climbed into the plane, he shouted, "Dasvidania."

"Dasvidania," I replied.

It was the first time Oscar had ever used a Russian expression when talking to me. "Dasvidania" means good-bye, but I don't know if it is "au revoir" or "adieu." I know Oscar meant "adieu."

The plane circled over Moscow before heading east, and I looked down at the city. It was the first time I had seen it from the air, and it was strange and unfamiliar. All cities and places seem impersonal when viewed from a seat in an airplane, and, even when returning to a country after a long absence, I miss the warm excitement travelling by air that I feel in a railroad train. The pleasure of identifying old land-marks is lessened by distance.

The flight from Moscow to Kuybyshev took about six hours, and we hedge-hopped all the way, flying so low that the red stars on the plane's wings could be easily seen from the ground. Russian fighter-pilots and anti-aircraft personnel had nervous trigger-

fingers; high-flying transports could easily be mistaken for enemy bombers, and we were taking no chances. Since the Kuybyshev airport was over thirty miles from the city, I was glad that Gen. Follett Bradley arrived from Moscow in his B-24 at the same time we did. The American Embassy sent a car to meet the general and he gave me a ride into the city with his crew. Charlie Dickerson, first secretary of the legation, had invited me to stay overnight with him; the plane for Teheran was not leaving until five o'clock the next morning, and I went directly to Dickerson's apartment. Charlie had not yet come home from work, but his maid offered me coffee and sandwiches. While I was waiting, Eddy Gilmore telephoned and asked if there were any vacant seats on the Teheran plane; he was going to Iran on vacation and had had trouble getting a reservation. I told him the plane was full, so Eddy decided to wait until the following week; we arranged to meet in Teheran provided I was still there when he arrived. Dickerson came home, and after dinner, suggested we go to the ballet. He had already bought tickets, but I felt too tired for the theatre and urged him to go without me. He finally agreed when I said I wanted to turn in early. Charlie and his charming wife, Connie, who was then in America, had been friends of mine for many years.

Dickerson's maid woke me at three o'clock in the morning; she had prepared a breakfast of bacon and eggs and coffee, and the chauffeur rang the doorbell soon after I had finished. I tried to wake Charlie to say good-bye to him before I left for the airport, but he was sleeping soundly. There were two passenger planes warming up on the field when I arrived, one going to Moscow and the other to Teheran; my plane took off a little before five o'clock, just as the dawn was breaking. We flew towards the Caspian Sea, with a blood-red sunrise and a clear sky promising good weather.

I inspected my fellow passengers; they included two Turkish girls, wives of members of the Turkish legation; the Soviet minister to Iran and one of his staff; the second secretary of the Greek ministry, and a sprinkling of other diplomats. We stopped at a small airdrome on the northeastern tip of the Caspian to refuel, pausing long enough for the passengers to stretch their legs and smoke a cigarette; then we took off again. I passed the time talking with the Greek secretary.

The young Greek seemed to be more impressed with the fact that I was an American than anything else; I told him I was a newspaperman, but it was obvious that if I had been an engineer or a diplomat, it would have meant the same thing. "American" was the magic word. He talked for over an hour describing Bulgarian atrocities in Greece and said he wanted me to write a story about the situation. I explained to him that the INS had a correspondent in Istanbul covering the Balkans, and that it was not my territory.

"I can write a memorandum of what you have told me for my foreign editor. But, unless you want me to quote you, I can't write a news dispatch. I don't know enough about Greece; I would have to write it as you have given it."

"Well, I can't let you use my name."

I shrugged.

"I didn't think you could, but you understand my position. Except in rare cases, we have to identify the source of our story. My editors would naturally ask me where I got my facts. But, as a matter of record, I think the American people are very well informed about the sufferings of the Greek people."

He nodded gloomily,

"I think they know a great deal. You understand, America is our only hope."

Our plane landed at Baku, and the Greek, and one of the

Turkish girls, and I walked across the sand to the waiting-room, where there was a restaurant. It was glaringly hot in the sun. The steel derricks of the oil fields stretched on all sides as far as the eye could see.

"This is the life-blood of the war," I said. "I hope the oil reaches the armies."

The Greek said,

"You have seen the Russian railroads. Just look around at these wells: do you think they have enough oil cars to transport all this, and do you think they have enough plants to refine it?"

"No; not from what I've seen. But they've got a lot of stuff that they've concealed."

"Yes, they have. They could transport it, but the Germans have captured a lot of their refineries. Your Oklahoma experts built a big one for them at Taganrog to refine the oil from Maikop and Grozny. The Russians blew it up before the Nazis walked in."

The Greek was gesticulating and pointing at the wells; we were standing in the shade of the airport building, and the Turkish girl said,

"I am hungry. I would like to eat."

We went up the stairs with her. The restaurant had sandwiches and cold beer (piva); it was pleasant sitting inside. The Greek was embarrassed because he felt he had talked too much, and he ate in silence. The Turkish girl said,

"You are American? You have seen Shirley Temple?"

"No," I replied, "I've never even been to California."

"Ah! But Clark Gable. You know him?"

"No, I don't know any movie stars."

She was plainly disappointed,

"Well, it does not matter. None of the Americans in Kuybyshev know Clark Gable either. It is a curious country; I would want to know Clark Gable if he were Turkish."

"You see, I haven't been home in seven years," I said. But I felt I had left the implication that if I had been home I would have known Clark Gable, so I added,

"Movie stars are very hard to meet."

She smiled and chewed on the remaining piece of her sandwich,

"Yes, of course. I miss the American movies. I am very unhappy in Kuybyshev. I am going home and see a film every day for a month. Then I am going back to my husband and my children. I hope we will not be too long in Russia."

"Of course, the war—" I began, but the Greek interrupted,

"Let us go back to the plane. I think we will take off soon."

We walked back across the sand; the customs officers were making a formal inspection of the baggage. Everybody on the plane except me had a diplomatic passport, and the customs were not opening their suitcases. An officer approached me and asked politely in English,

"Have you anything to declare?"

I said no, and he checked my name off his list and passed on. It was the first time I had ever had such casual treatment at the Russian frontier; the guards usually made a thorough examination of all luggage, and there had even been cases when travellers were personally searched. But, since the war the government had been so careful about whom they allowed to enter the country that the exit officials may have thought their former vigilance was no longer necessary.

Our plane took off for the flight over the mountains to Teheran, and, this time, we ceased hedge-hopping, and rose to fourteen thousand feet. My ears began to tingle from the high altitude, and it became so cold that I put on my overcoat. We caught occasional glimpses of snow-covered peaks through the clouds, but it was not until we had cleared the mountains and descended to

five thousand feet over the Iranian plains that we were able to view the countryside. There was not much of interest to look at; the terrain had an arid, brown-colored appearance and was barren of signs of human life. There were no farms, and the first indication of any activity was a macadam road along which a few trucks were passing.

"The Soviets have taken over an airdrome at Teheran," said one of the passengers. "The Iranians wanted to install a custom house at the field, but the Russians wouldn't let them."

"Won't there be any inspection?" I asked.

"No. I'll be surprised if any one asks for your passport at all while you're in Iran."

"Damn. I went to a lot of trouble in Moscow getting an Iranian visa."

He laughed,

"Everybody does. All the airfields are controlled by the British and Russians, and they are not interested in Iranian visas, but since visitors expect it necessary to have passport permits, the Iran government doesn't lose any revenue."

The airdrome at which we landed was flying the red flag of the Soviet Union and had an efficient Russian ground crew. As we taxied to a stop at the end of a long cement runway, I was pleased to see my old friend, Ed Stevens, and several members of the American legation waiting to meet the plane. Stevens explained that they had come to the airport to collect three diplomatic pouches from Moscow. I started to hail a taxi to take me to the Ferdowsi Hotel, but one of the officers of the American legation said,

"I think the Ferdowsi is full up. Somebody tried to get a room there this morning, and they said they had no vacancies."

I was wondering where I would stay when Ed Stevens suggested,

"Why don't you bunk with me? I have a double room at the Darban Hotel, and I'm alone because my roommate left for India yesterday. The Darban is about ten miles outside of Teheran. It's hard to hire taxis to go out there, but that won't bother you unless you have to come in town every day."

The American consul added,

"That's a good idea. The Darban is the best hotel in Iran; it's more like a country club. I lived there until I couldn't get tires for my car."

I told Ed I would be glad to stay with him, and he said,

"Good. Let's have dinner in town tonight. We can go to the Ferdowsi and check your bags. I have to meet some one there anyway."

Teheran had broad, neatly paved streets, but I immediately noticed the open sewers that ran parallel to the sidewalks. They were about a foot deep and two feet wide and were uncovered except at street intersections. No primitive arrangements could have been more unsanitary. Donkey water carriers and droshky-drivers sitting behind emaciated horses ignored the loud horns of automobiles, and traffic proceeded at leisurely pace.

"The mysterious East," said Ed. "Quite a change from Moscow."

It was getting dark, and street lights gave the city a more attractive appearance. Shop windows were illuminated, revealing articles of clothing and shoes and stockings for sale; we passed butcher shops piled high with meat and grocery stores whose shelves were lined with canned goods.

"That looks good to me after Russia."

"It doesn't mean that Teheran is prosperous," explained Ed. "Most of the people are too poor to buy these things."

The Ferdowsi Hotel was an unpretentious frame building, but it had a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Teheran was a meeting place for travellers from India, Russia, Egypt, and Turkey, and there

were usually half a dozen correspondents and ferry pilots gathered in the Ferdowsi bar. It was possible to obtain scotch or rye, but the prices were so prohibitive that the usual drink was vodka and vermouth. The barmaids were pretty Polish refugees, one of whom passed her time reading a Polish translation of Zane Grey's *The Light of the Western Stars*.

Stevens had an appointment with Col. Abraham Neuwirth, a U.S. Army medical officer on leave, who was health adviser to the Iranian government, and we went up to his room. Neuwirth received us cordially and poured drinks; I declined, saying I wanted to have my blood pressure checked before I drank anything. I explained that the American Embassy doctor's baumanometer in Moscow had broken a few weeks before I left, and I had not gone to a Russian hospital to have it done.

"Can you give me the name of a good Persian doctor?" I asked.

"I'll take your blood pressure right now if you want," said Neuwirth. "I have a baumanometer."

"Don't bother," I said. "It will be easy for me to attend to it tomorrow."

But the Colonel had already unpacked his instrument and was strapping the band on my arm. A few minutes later, he said,

"Your blood pressure is normal."

It was a relief to know I was starting on the trip home without having to worry about the danger of any immediate complications, and I thanked him. He concluded,

"Well, I guess you can take that drink now. One won't hurt you, but I wouldn't drink much until you've had a complete overhauling in America."

Ed Stevens wanted to write a story about the Persian health situation and began to ask the doctor questions concerning his work. It appeared that Neuwirth's biggest problem was the country's water supply; it was not fit to drink. There was an interna-

tional standard relative to the amount of germs which drinking water could safely contain, and the Iran water supply had twice the germ content allowed by any nation.

"The only real solution would be to build a new reservoir, but the government is unwilling to spend the money that it would cost. I'm doing all I can to improve public health, although nothing permanently effective can be accomplished until the water supply is improved."

He was trying to persuade the government to cover the open sewers of Teheran and believed he was making progress along this line. There was some opposition, however, to his desire for compulsory inoculation against smallpox, typhus, and typhoid fever; the people were not sufficiently advanced to understand the need for such a step, and they would resent it. There was official unwillingness to arouse the population because there was still some unrest since 1941 when the British and the Russians had removed Reza Shah Pahlavi for collaborating with the Axis and placed his 23-year-old son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, on the throne. The Prime Minister, Ali Soheily, was friendly to the Allies and was doing as well as he could under the circumstances.

The fact was that the Persians were deathly afraid of the Russians and did not overly love the British. Their fear of the Russians had no definite cause but was a feeling shared by all of the small countries within reach of Moscow. I have found the same attitude in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia, and, of course, Finland. Even in Stockholm, I have had Swedes speak nervously to me about the Bear of the North, and the Turks have always been wary in their dealings with Moscow. I know that many Russians would regret this attitude and consider their neighbors' fears unwarranted, but, justified or not, the feeling exists. The Persians were not afraid of the British; they simply regarded them as absentee owners of their oil wells. They did not dislike them particularly,

but it would be inaccurate to say they enthusiastically admired them.

Stevens and I said good night to Colonel Neuwirth and went down to the lobby where we met Mary Brock, an American correspondent, talking with an RAF pilot and a Red Cross worker. They were going to dinner and invited us to go along with them. We went to a small restaurant featuring excellent hors d'œuvres, and, after the meal, Ed and I took a taxi out to the Darban Hotel. The Darban, although only ten miles from the city, was 2,000 feet above it in altitude. My first view of the Darban's blazing lights and modernistic exterior confirmed the American consul's description of it as "like a country club." The interior was more luxuriously furnished than anything I had seen in Teheran. Our room had a balcony with an excellent view; the beds were comfortable, and, after soaking in the sunken bathtub, I decided I was going to enjoy my visit to Iran.

The next morning at breakfast Ed introduced me to several Americans who were acting as advisers to the Persian government. Col. Lyman Timmerman, who had once been in charge of the Chicago police force, had come to Persia to reorganize Teheran's metropolitan police force. The improvement of the rural police force was being handled by Col. H. Norman Schwarzkopf; he had a difficult assignment because many of the wild tribesmen in the mountains had never recognized any other authority than that of their chieftain. They were frequently unfriendly, and it was dangerous to venture alone into the interior. The wife of Winston Burdett, CBS correspondent, had been murdered by tribesmen under shocking circumstances. It was known that many Persian rifles were hidden in the mountains before the army surrendered to the British and Russians, and this war material presented a constant threat. An Axis-inspired revolt was always possible. Colonel Schwarzkopf had been superintendent of the New

Jersey State Police when the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped and murdered.

Other American advisers included genial, cigar-smoking Joseph Sheridan, a retired millionaire, who for twenty years was Cairo's leading wholesale grocer. His biggest problem in Iran was controlling prices and fighting the black market; the cost of living had soared to a point where the poorer classes were threatened with starvation. Professor Luther M. Winsor, the agricultural consultant, was attempting to introduce a system of irrigation. Despite what had been done in Russia and America by irrigation, Persian landowners were reluctant to face the initial cost of bringing it to their own country. Maj.-Gen. Clarence S. Ridley was adviser to the Iranian army; the officers had good uniforms and a fair rate of pay, but the privates were poorly fed and underpaid, and their uniforms were ill-fitting, faded khaki. Dr. Arthur Millspaugh, political scientist, was guiding the reform of the national economy, which had been left in a mess by the old Shah, Reza Pahlavi. These men were lent unofficially by the United States, and they were paid by the Persian government. Each was an expert in his field, but unfortunately they had no authority; they could only advise.

Yet it was good to see men of Dr. Arthur Millspaugh's ability recognized for what they were worth. Dr. Millspaugh had tried twenty-one years before to reform Persia's national economy, and it was only because the Iranian government had not carried through his suggestions that Persian economic conditions were so bad. It was a signal personal triumph that they had called him back two decades later and asked him to try again. In a similar way, the Russians had honored Andre Nicolaievitch Tupolev, noted airplane designer, who was awarded the annual Stalin prize of 100,000 roubles in March, 1943, for designing a new type fighter plane. Tupolev designed the plane which Russian airmen

used to fly over the North Pole to America in 1937. The plane was named according to his initials, ANT. Then, Tupolev fell into disgrace and was arrested. The correspondents thought he had been liquidated. But Stalin brought him out of prison when the war started; Tupolev was again successful, and the name ANT, which had been changed after his arrest, was restored to the transpolar plane. Millspaugh, of course, had never been arrested, but both he and Tupolev lived to see themselves called back and vindicated.

Ed Stevens and I had been invited to lunch by Mrs. Dreyfus, the wife of the American Minister. We drove into Teheran early because Ed had business to take care of before lunch, and I wanted to see about my airplane tickets to Cairo. I received a surprise at the Pan-American office when I learned that the U.S. Army had taken over Pan-Am, and the service between Teheran and Cairo had been discontinued the week before. There was nothing left except to try British Airways, and they informed me that they were booked with British priority passengers for weeks in advance. Fortunately, John Reed, of the British Embassy in Moscow, had given me letters of introduction to his friends in Teheran, and I thought they might be able to arrange an airplane priority for me. So, having decided to call at the British legation in the afternoon, I went to Mrs. Dreyfus' luncheon. There were about eighteen guests, mostly members of the diplomatic colony, and, since the minister was ill in bed, Mrs. Dreyfus performed the introductions herself. She was a charming hostess, and it was one of the pleasantest luncheons I had ever attended. Mrs. Dreyfus obviously enjoyed entertaining, and I regretted I was not able to meet her husband.

After leaving the legation, Stevens and I went to the British Embassy where I presented my letters of introduction and I received a promise of help in obtaining a ticket to Cairo. There

was little more we could do for the time being, so we walked downtown towards the Ferdowsi Hotel. As we entered the lobby, Mary Brock was leaving to go to the office of the press department; Stevens had left a story with the censors the day before, and he wanted to cable it, so we walked with her. On the way, they explained the rigors of the Teheran censorship to me; it appeared, by all odds, to be the toughest in the world. There was not one censorship but three, Persian, Russian, and English. It can be imagined that a story that would satisfy all three censorships would never be likely to make headlines. A five-hundred word cable, for example, might be cut to four hundred words when it left the Persian censor, three hundred by the English censor, and fifty by the Russian censor. Mary Brock had patience.

We went back to the Ferdowsi Hotel, and an English newspaperman told me Bill Chaplin had arrived an hour before from New Delhi. Bill was on his way to take my place in Moscow for the International News Service. I asked the clerk for his room number and went upstairs and found that Bill's "room" was a large dormitory with twenty beds; Chaplin had been assigned to the last bed. His only equipment was that suitable for the hot climate of India, shirts with short sleeves, and a sun helmet; he intended to buy clothes for Russia while he was in Teheran. Edgar Snow had come up from India with him and was leaving by plane the next morning for Moscow. Snow had already bought his equipment; his bags weighed the forty pounds allowed him on the plane, and he was trying to decide whether to buy a bottle of whiskey or a bottle of grapefruit juice to carry in his coat pocket. I advised the grapefruit juice, arguing that the whiskey wouldn't last long but that the grapefruit juice could be mixed with vodka and would make several drinks. Snow agreed and bought the grapefruit juice.

Eddy Gilmore arrived the same evening from Moscow; Stevens

and I knew of a double room that was vacant at the Darban Hotel and suggested that Chaplin and Gilmore take it. Anything seemed better than the dormitory at the Ferdowsi so Chaplin called the Darban and made a reservation. We went to Teheran's only night club for dinner; the food was not as good as that at the hotel, and the orchestra played "Deep in the Heart of Texas" nine times during the evening. The only compensation was watching Persian officers solemnly clapping hands to the music; there was no doubt they enjoyed American jazz.

Teheran was a pleasant change after Russia, but I was eager to get home and was worried at the slowness with which British Airways was arranging for my priority. At this time, Admiral Standley flew to Teheran in General Bradley's B-24 on his way to America. The ambassador was accompanied by his aides, Eddie Paige, Captain Duncan, Colonel Mikella, and Lieut.-Commander Frankel. They arrived in the afternoon and stayed overnight at the American legation. While they were there, I telephoned Captain Duncan and asked him if there was a possibility of riding as far as Cairo with the ambassador. He said he would ask Admiral Standley and call me back. He telephoned twenty minutes later.

"The Admiral says you can go," he announced. "Be ready at five o'clock tomorrow morning."

I told Ed Stevens and Gilmore the news; Gilmore wanted to go to Cairo also, but he had neglected to get an Egyptian visa, and it was too late to go to the consulate. All government offices closed early in Teheran. We decided not to go into the city that night but to have dinner at the Darban. The bar was filled in the evening; everybody knew one another, and the waiters drew up two long tables in the dining-room and arranged a semi-banquet for us. It was a spontaneous gathering and a good finale for my last evening in Iran. The party broke up a little after eleven

o'clock, because we all wanted to get to bed early. The hotel was quiet after midnight, but I woke up about three o'clock thinking I had heard a loud scream. I listened, but I heard nothing else and went back to sleep.

I had left word to be called at quarter of five, and a maid came in and woke me. She was excited, sobbing hysterically and wringing her hands. She said a man had been killed a few hours before by falling through the opening of the circular staircase from the fourth floor to the lobby. I dressed and went down to the desk. Colonel Timmerman was talking to three uniformed members of the Teheran police; the man was still lying on the marble floor. His head was crushed; one arm was bent under him and both his legs were twisted. A young American aircraft worker told me how it had happened; he had entered the hotel about the same time as the man who had been killed. The man was drunk, and the American helped him up to the fourth floor. When they got to his room, the man said he had forgotten his key, and he ran over to the banisters and shouted down for the room-clerk to bring it up to him. He swayed, lost his balance, and toppled over the railing before the American could reach him. The man screamed as he fell; the American was still trembling as he told me. It was the scream I had heard at three o'clock.

After drinking a cup of coffee I rode out to the airport with Eddie Paige. The crew, Lee Fiegel, Tom Watson, and Bill Hicks, were warming up the plane. Admiral Standley and Captain Duncan arrived a few minutes later, and we took off in a bright sunrise. The interior of the B-24 had not been altered for General Bradley's use, and we sat on the floor or on boxes. The trip was more agreeable, however, than any I had ever taken in a passenger plane because of its informality; we were free to lie down or sit up, or read or talk as we saw fit, and the time passed quickly.

We landed at a British airdrome near Bagdad at noon, and the commandant took us to the officers' quarters for beer and sandwiches. The desert was bakingly hot, and the coolness of the large mess-hall was a surprising contrast. After finishing our cigarettes, we took off again for the final lap of the flight to Cairo. Although we maintained a good altitude, the heat inside the plane increased, and we shed our coats and ties. Captain Duncan pointed out a few Biblical spots as we passed over Palestine, but I felt too thirsty to take much interest. We descended at the Cairo military airport at four o'clock and climbed out of the plane sweating and wilted. Alexander Kirk, the American minister to Egypt, and other dignitaries, all dressed in immaculate white suits, were on hand to greet Admiral Standley. Although not officially a member of the party, I was introduced all around, and most of the dignitaries seemed to think I was connected with the embassy. But Kirk knew me; he had been in Moscow as *Chargé d'Affaires* in 1938, and he laughed as he shook hands.

"I might know you'd be travelling with the ambassador. I'm giving a dinner for him tonight. Will you come?"

I thanked him and said I'd be glad to accept. Then Captain Duncan and I got into one of the cars and drove to Shepheards Hotel.

Half the trip was over.

CHAPTER XVII

EL ALEMEIN

THE DESK CLERK at Shepherds said rooms had been reserved for Admiral Standley's party, but there was no reservation for me. He added that he had no vacancies, and there were not likely to be any for two or three days. I knew that George Lait, the INS correspondent with the British Army in the Middle East, had a room at the hotel, and I called him on the telephone. His roommate, Chester Morrison, answered and said that George had been expecting me. He was on an assignment at the time and would be out in the desert for two or three days. Chester asked me to come up to the room and said he could get me a place to stay. I took my bag and went right up, first asking the bell-hop to send up some ice-water. I was thirstier than I ever remembered being before; it was the change from the climate of Moscow to the dry desert heat. Chester watched me drink two glasses of water, then said,

"I'll order something you never had in Russia: ice cream."

"That would be a treat. I've got something for you and George that you can't get in Cairo: caviar. It's a present from Ed Stevens."

After we ate the ice cream, I took a bath and shaved while Chester went to ask Hart Preston if he would share his room with me. Preston's roommate, Bob Landry, was on an assignment in the desert, and Preston readily agreed to let me use Landry's bed. I went down to the hotel terrace to meet Captain Duncan before going to Kirk's dinner party. The Captain and Colonel Mikella were sitting at a table waiting for Commander Frankel,

and I sat down with them. It was getting dark, and we listened to the dance music from the dining-room while watching the couples walking in the palm garden. Women in beautiful evening gowns, perfectly manicured and coiffured, swept past escorted by desert-bronzed officers. Arabs wearing long white gowns and red fez-caps strolled dignifiedly through the streets.

"I've been too long in Russia," I said. "I forgot that there was anything like this."

"Yes, it's nice all right," said Colonel Mikella, "but Rommel's army is only about a hundred miles away."

Frankel joined us, and we took a taxi to Kirk's residence. It was a sumptuous house; Kirk was independently wealthy, much of his fortune having been inherited. General Maxwell, and the British ambassador and his wife, and Sir Miles and Lady Lampson, were among the guests. The service was impeccable, and the food and wines were delicious. But I couldn't help thinking the whole thing was incongruous; it was not right to be sitting at such a luxurious dinner when millions in Russia were starving, and, less than a hundred miles away, British tommies were gripping rifles and straining their eyes peering into the desert darkness. Such dinners would have been exceptional anywhere in war-time, but they had no place in Cairo. And yet they did. Cairo was one of the most easy-living cities in the world: one could get anything for a price. American cigarettes and American canned beer were for sale on every corner; silk stockings and expensive dresses were to be seen in shop-windows. Articles that had virtually disappeared in America, and had not been sold in England since the war started, could be bought in Cairo. The decadent richness of the city mocked soldiers on leave from the front. The British authorities were aware of the situation, but they said they could do nothing; Egypt was neutral.

"Certain Cairo merchants are getting rich on this war," said a

British official to me. "We know it, but we cannot interfere. We ought to take over Egypt for the duration, stop this profiteering, and put Cairo on a war footing. But we cannot do that because of your own country; think what an outcry there would be in America if we attempted to change Egypt's status, even temporarily."

"I think America's attitude would be different if they knew what a mess this place is. I realize that coming from Moscow, the waste and high living in Cairo have especially shocked me," I said, "but those coming from London must feel it too, in a lesser degree."

"They do," he said, "but there is another factor. Don't forget the Americans have censorship rights here too. Some of your officials, both military and diplomatic, enjoy the life and don't want anything written that will change it. Talk to some of your own newspapermen and ask them how many stories exposing conditions have been killed."

The Egyptians, both officials and civilians, had a thinly disguised policy of ignoring the British; some were pro-Axis, and others openly said they didn't care who won the war. The British, fearful of exciting American public opinion, tolerated the situation in silence. Both Cairo and Alexandria had fifth-column elements; it was said that Italian soldiers who had lived in Alexandria before the war used to come in from the desert to that important seaport and spend weekends with their wives. Although the Italian soldier story was probably apocryphal, it was certain that the Germans were warned well in advance of the last British seaborne invasion of Tobruk from Alexandria. They knew exactly the hour when the battleships were due to arrive, and, when the last destroyers had come within range of their shore-guns, they opened devastating fire. Very few of the British ships escaped.

The American Army officials who had taken over the office of

Pan-American Airways told me that I could not have a seat on a plane before eight days. Having time to kill, I spent hours sight-seeing, and, like every other tourist, I went out to visit the pyramids. They were all that I had expected, but I thought the Sphinx was a fraud. Photographers from time immemorial have taken pictures of it from an angle that makes it appear much bigger than it is. I added to the general deception connected with the Sphinx by posing in front of it on a flea-bitten camel. The camel was something of a personality; through the years she had supported the backsides of at least a million tourists while her mournful-looking owner asked each one to look pleasant for the camera.

My roommate, Hart Preston, asked me what I thought of Cairo, and I said,

"It's too damned unreal. I know all this good food in restaurants, and champagne cocktails at five o'clock are just surface indications, but even if ninety per cent of the people are poverty-stricken, it's still wrong for the other ten per cent to live like this. In fact, it's worse."

He laughed.

"You haven't seen anything yet. Come with me tonight to the Continental roof-garden."

The Continental Hotel was about a block away from Shepheard's, and the roof-garden must have been the final dream of every soldier on leave. Palm-trees, soft music, lavish furnishings, and an Oriental belly-dancer helped to make it one of the most famous spots in the Middle East. The Cairo anti-aircraft battery was having search-light practice, and, while Preston and I ate in the cool breeze under the awnings, we watched the shafts of light penetrate the sky like long white fingers.

"I would have loved this in peace-time," I said, "but it just makes me sick now."

"Well, you've got another week of it," remarked Preston.

"No, George Lait is meeting me at Shepheards tomorrow. The British military authorities gave him permission to take me up to the front, so I'm spending the week in the desert. I want to see something of the army while I'm here."

"That's a good idea," said Preston. "Everything is different up at the front. You can't judge the situation by what you see in Cairo."

Lait called for me in the morning, and we took an early train to Alexandria. George and I had worked together in London, but I had not seen him for more than a year. He was brown and looked fit, although he said he suffered from occasional recurrences of malaria. We went to a hotel in Alexandria where George had an appointment with the press officer who was going to drive us out to the camp. The officer suggested we have lunch and leave immediately afterwards so we went to one of the waterfront restaurants. We had an excellent fish luncheon and drove out on the road towards El Alemein. Preparations were under way for an offensive, but both the British and German lines had been stabilized for several weeks, and there was only desultory action at the time.

"Instead of going directly to the front, I suggest you stop a day or two at the minefield clearance school where we are going to spend the night," said the press officer. "The sappers have some of the most dangerous work in the army; a group has just finished the course and is taking examinations."

The school interested me, and I said I would like to see their work, so George decided we would spend two days at the camp. The instructors had laid out an imitation desert minefield with trip-wires and booby-traps, and the officers and men had set up their tents on a nearby hillside. The first night after dinner the commander waited until it was dark and then sent his student-

sappers out to clear the minefield. The dummy mines were attached to a small explosive about the size of a firecracker.

"We try to make it as realistic as possible. This is a bad minefield with every tricky device known to us," said the commander. "The men have two hours in which to clear a swath one hundred yards wide through the field. They mark this with stakes on each side so that the infantry can see what ground is safe. They must not leave any mines within the cleared area."

"A sapper can make only one mistake, and that's his last," said an officer.

"Well," said the commander, opening a bottle of Scotch, "let's have a drink while we're waiting for them to finish."

We sat talking in the tent for about an hour. During a lull in the conversation, we heard a faint pop out in the desert.

"That's a mine," said Lait.

"Yes, that's the first one," admitted an officer. "The hell of it is that, if we'd been waiting to attack, the sapper would not only have been killed but the explosion would have warned the enemy."

The men finished without any further accidents, and, after they had reported to the officer in charge, the commander suggested we walk out on the minefield and see what they had done. It was pitch dark, and as we walked along, I said,

"I can't see anything. The desert looks all the same to me."

The commander chuckled.

"Well, if you stick close to me you won't walk on any mines."

"That's right," said another officer admiringly. "The Major certainly has a sixth sense about those booby traps."

Just then the commander stumbled on a trip-wire, and there was a loud bang. I was glad it was dark so the commander couldn't see us; we all wanted to laugh, but we knew he was embarrassed and might have resented it. There was an awkward silence which the commander finally broke.

"That's one on me, eh what!" he exclaimed, "Haw, haw."

George later told me that the commander was one of the most outstanding mine experts in the British army; he had simply had bad luck. We finished looking over the minefield, but the commander's heart was no longer in the inspection, and we soon returned to the tent. It turned surprisingly cold, and I was glad to have blankets in my sleeping bag; but the air was clear, and I slept better than I had any night in Cairo.

We had breakfast the next morning in the officers' tent: bread, butter, tea, marmalade, cereal and bacon and eggs. The sappers' last examination was to be held during the morning, and, as I was finishing a cup of tea, the commander approached me and said,

"The men have heard that you have just come from Moscow, and they would like to ask you a few questions about Russia, if you don't mind."

"Not at all," I said. "I'd be glad to tell them anything I can."

The soldiers sat around on the sand, and I began by describing some of the conditions in Russia; then I asked them to give me some questions. We were there for about forty minutes and it was an interesting session. I had often wondered what the men fighting on other fronts thought about the Soviet Union. They wanted to know about conditions of employment, about literacy in the Red Army, and what, in general, were Russia's war aims. They were manifestly friendly towards Russia; I didn't detect any anti-Soviet feeling, their attitude was one of gratitude for Russia's great fight against the Germans rather than sympathy for her social system. One private asked me,

"Why is it we know so little about Russia? They don't even let many people visit their country. A friend of mine asked for a visa a few years ago and was refused."

"They don't trust foreigners," I said. "They've had a hard twenty years, and they are suspicious of other nations. We just

have to work with them on that basis; it's useless to think that the war will cause Russia to open its doors."

When the discussion was finished, the soldiers lined up in groups of eight on the outskirts of the minefield. Two men in each group carried instruments not unlike vacuum cleaners. They said these were the mine detectors. The operators wore earphones attached to the detectors, and they advanced into the minefields side by side swinging the instruments in an arc over the sand. The earphones made a buzzing sound when the detector passed over a buried metallic object; each operator was accompanied by an assistant who occasionally relieved him in the task of swinging the heavy instrument. Three men walked about twenty paces behind the operators, and, when a buried mine was detected, they ran forward to neutralize it. First they stretched at full length away from the mine and cautiously scooped the sand from it; then they unscrewed the delicate mechanism which discharged the explosive, and finally they marked the spot with a stake so that the mine could eventually be removed. They had a dangerous assignment because the Germans arranged some mechanisms with a hair-trigger lightness that would explode when barely touched; other mines had a second concealed spring which detonated the explosive as soon as the first mechanism was unscrewed. There were various types of these buried machines: some were designed to destroy heavy tanks and would not explode except under the greatest pressure, but the majority reacted to the weight of a single man. The last man in each group walked about thirty paces in the rear carrying a sub-machine gun; he was the only member of the minesweepers armed with any weapon except a revolver.

This, then, was the method of dealing with mines; the men displayed remarkable team-work, each sapper knew his job and carried out his part with clock-work precision. It was necessary

for them to attain a high degree of accuracy since they usually had to carry out their task in darkness. It was obviously a nerve-racking business, with the possibility of each step being the soldier's last. An officer commented,

"I know it looks like a hell of a job, but ninety per cent of the accidents are results of carelessness. If a soldier listens to instructions and follows them exactly the hazards can be reduced to a mathematical formula."

"That's true," added an instructor, "bad luck with a tricky mechanism, or being spotted by enemy fire, are risks that cannot be eliminated, but there are scientific safeguards against most of the dangers."

The examination concluded, we went to the mess tent and had lunch. The press officer suggested we drive to El Alemein in the afternoon, and, after we had packed our bags, George and I said good-bye to the Major and thanked him for showing us the school. It was a cool day, and the road to the front ran near the shores of the Mediterranean; heavily laden trucks, tanks, and mobile artillery were all heading in the same direction. We had to drive slowly, but we arrived at El Alemein at sundown. There was little activity at the front, although the men were keyed up for the coming offensive.

"This time it's going to be for keeps," said a New Zealand officer.

There is nothing quite like the atmosphere of an army camp just before a great attack; some men are nervous and show it, others are calm almost to the point of indifference. Most of the men with whom I talked were veterans of two years of desert warfare; they knew exactly what was ahead of them. They were joking about the troubles of an English officer in command of a company of Sikhs; these giant colored soldiers from India liked to go out at night to capture prisoners. They appeared one morn-

ing and presented their officer with forty Italians whom they had taken on a midnight foray.

"What the hell am I going to do with these prisoners?" he roared. "I told you we can't spare a guard to accompany them back to Alexandria."

The Sikhs looked disappointed, but they ceased bringing in prisoners. Two weeks later, the officer learned that they were continuing their midnight diversion. They made nightly raids, but they were obeying orders: they didn't take prisoners; it was easier, after all, to kill the enemy.

The next four days passed quickly; there were occasional artillery exchanges but little important action.

"The Germans know we're getting ready to hit them," said the press officer, "and they realize that we have superiority in everything: numbers, tanks, artillery, and airplanes. I hope they don't start retreating before we get a crack at them; Rommel may decide to fall back to Bengazi."

"Why don't you want Rommel to retreat?" I asked.

"Because our aim is to destroy his army, not to capture desert territory. We have short lines of communication here at El Alemein; the advantage is all on our side. We might even cut him off, and that would end the show. But if he starts retreating we will have to chase him, and it's a hell of a job to transport all this material across the desert."

I had a reservation on a plane leaving Cairo the next day so I had to go back to the city. It was a disappointment to witness all the preparation and not be able to stay for the climax. George Lait drove into Alexandria with me, and I wished him luck as I boarded my train; I last saw him striding across the platform towards the army truck. He was in a hurry to get back to the front; it was not probable that the offensive would start before another week, but there was always a possibility of a flare-up. The

train was not crowded; few soldiers were on leave, and we made good time. I went to Shepherds Hotel as soon as I arrived and found that Hart Preston's roommate, Bob Landry, had returned. The desk clerk gave me another room for the night, however, and, after I had taken a shower, Preston, Landry and I went to a nearby restaurant for dinner. Landry, who had worked in Hollywood for *Life* magazine before going abroad, was an old sidekick of Frank Muto, my companion in the German-Polish war, and we swapped stories until late that night.

I rode out to the airport the next morning with a genial Texas oil man named Kuss who was taking the same plane. Kuss and an American dentist, Dr. Don Clawson, and I sat together in the rear of the transport, while a group of Yugoslavian and Polish ferry pilots filled the forward seats. The manager of an American airplane factory in India was returning to the United States with his chief test-pilot, who had broken his leg in a plane crash. The test-pilot's leg had not mended correctly, and he was going to Johns Hopkins for further treatment. He could walk with the aid of a cane, and he had a rubber mattress which he inflated and slept on during most of the trip.

We stayed overnight at Khartoum and continued the next day to Accra. We were forced to halt there three days because several ferry pilots were waiting for transportation ahead of us, and, while delayed, we were given lodging in the barracks of a transient camp for American air-force personnel. I was glad of the opportunity to meet the American boys; after being abroad seven years, it was a thrill to be among so many of my own countrymen. I had seen most of the armies of the world, but I had never before come in contact with any of the U. S. fighting forces. My first reaction was that they were better educated and in better physical condition than the foreign armies I had seen. They had a clear idea of why America was in the war and what they were fighting for. But

the characteristic that impressed me most was that each private was a definite individual with ideas of his own. They had not lost their personalities in the routine and drilling and merging process that is part of military life. This unfortunately was not true even in the British army which encouraged individual initiative far more than did European armies.

I talked with several of the privates, one of whom, Arthur Kingsbury of Portland, Connecticut, was typical of the boys at the camp. He was a serious, clean-cut young fellow who had been a student at Wesleyan College when he was drafted; he had a rational attitude towards the war. He accepted philosophically the fact that he was in uniform in Africa instead of finishing his college education, and, as a result of this attitude, was not having a bad time. Neither he nor the others seemed to be unhappy. As Kingsbury said, it was a matter of simple duty and he was seeing something of the world, besides learning a lot that he wouldn't have done otherwise. By standards of personal intelligence and education, Kingsbury and most of the other privates I met would have been officers in any European army. They asked me to go swimming with them one afternoon; a bus took us to the beach where natives sold coconuts for five cents each. The water was warm, but yet cold enough to be invigorating; it was the first time I had had a swim in salt water for three years. Sitting on the beach drinking milk from a coconut, I felt a stronger glow of pure animal pleasure than I had known since boyhood. Moscow was far away.

When I returned to the camp, Dr. Clawson told me that we were booked to leave for Fisherman's Lake in the morning. I went to bed early, was up at four o'clock, and we took off before dawn. On the plane, Dr. Clawson showed me a tom-tom which a local dentist, one of his former students at the American University at Beirut, had given him. Clawson would have been at

home anywhere in Africa; the dentist of every town at which we landed seemed to have studied under him at Beirut, and they were all anxious to offer him hospitality.

We landed at an airport near Fisherman's Lake at ten o'clock in the morning, and an officer directed us to the bus that was to take us to the inlet which the Atlantic Clippers used as their Liberian terminus. The ancient vehicle swayed through the narrow jungle road and came to a stop at a small native village. The driver got out, saying he was going to get a pail of water to fill the steaming radiator. It was hot, and the African heat seemed more oppressive to us after hours of flying in the comparative coolness of ten thousand feet. Suddenly, from one of the grass huts, a phonograph blared; we recognized the music as Duke Ellington's "Solitude," a good piece anywhere, but the last thing we expected to hear in this jungle wilderness. Then, three dusky girls, barefoot, but wearing bright red dresses, came out of the hut and began to dance. They linked their arms back of each other and kicked in rhythm. They were giving us a show. Somebody in the bus said,

"Swing comes to the jungle."

The record stopped, and all three girls ran inside the hut. They put on "St. Louis Blues," and one girl came out alone wearing shorts and a brassiere. She was slender and lithe, had flashing white teeth, and was obviously enjoying herself. She liked having an audience, and she was pleased to see us craning our necks in the bus; a Canadian ferry pilot exclaimed,

"Well, I'll be damned. In the heart of nowhere, a hootchie-kootch dance."

The driver got in the bus, and we started bouncing through the leafy jungle again. The Canadian leaned back in his seat and said,

"Now can anybody tell me where they learned to dance like that?"

"And where," somebody added, "did they get the phonograph, the records and the dresses?"

We asked the driver, but he said,

"I don't know anything about the villages around here."

When we reached Fisherman's Lake, we were told that we would have to wait eight hours for the next plane to take off. The Canadian and I sat on the station verandah, ordered Coca Colas and watched the natives unloading a ship. The Negroes balanced each package on their heads, marching in single columns from the dock to the warehouse. Most of them were bare-foot and wore just a simple loin-cloth or an old pair of trousers.

A colored boy wearing American soldier's fatigue uniform walked by and, noticing us, said,

"Could you spare a cigarette? I left mine in my other clothes."

I invited him to join us and have a drink. He sat down, sighing.

"Boy, I wish I was home."

I asked him where his home was, and he said in Washington, D. C., and that he had been an automobile mechanic before the war.

"There are quite a few of us colored boys here," he added, "and I guess it isn't so bad, but I get pretty homesick at times. Say, how long do you think it will last?" he asked suddenly.

"I wouldn't like to make a guess," I said, "but I'm afraid it's going to last a long time."

The Canadian chuckled and said to the soldier,

"I forgot about you American colored boys being here. Now I think I understand about those girls up the road."

The boy with us laughed,

"Did they act up when your bus was passing? We have a lot

of fun with them. I guess we wouldn't have anything to do nights if they weren't around. We taught some of them how to dance."

He looked at his watch and stood up,

"Well, I got to go," he said, "give my regards to the old U. S. A."

After he had walked away, the Canadian said,

"It was a smart move, sending your Negro troops here. They ought to be able to build up a lot of good-will with the natives."

"Well, they seem to be trying, anyway," I said.

Good-will or not, Liberia was an unattractive place for any American, white or black, and I could well understand our colored troops' desire to go home. The damp climate was unhealthful, and malaria was so prevalent that a quinine pill had to be taken with every meal to ward off the disease. The troops had to provide their own amusements, as there were no local movies or other recreations.

A launch took us out to the clipper at seven o'clock, and we took off a few minutes later. Everybody felt elated to be crossing the Atlantic Ocean, even if our destination was South America rather than New York Harbor. I had read stories of the happiness which refugees feel at leaving Lisbon on their way to America, and I thought my own emotion must be akin to that which they experienced. I was not "escaping" Europe, but I was going home; I had witnessed almost every phase of the war from the time the first bomb fell on Warsaw, through the London blitz, and the Nazi checkmate in Russia. I was tired, and, as the clipper rose from the water at Fisherman's Lake, I felt as though a heavy load had been lifted from my shoulders.

It has been said that clipper planes are as comfortable as Pullman cars; they are, in fact, much easier to ride in than anything

that is drawn on rails. I slept without interruption until we came down in Natal harbor; the passengers and crew went ashore for breakfast, and then we continued our flight north until we came to Belem at the mouth of the Amazon where we stopped for the night. The clipper had a large contingent of ex-Pan-American (African Division) pilots and ground crew coming home; they had been given their choice of joining the air force when the army took over their line or resigning. The pilots had been offered commissions and many of the ground crew would have been given sergeant's rating if they had remained in Africa. But most of them chose to resign. As one pilot expressed it,

"Pan-American built up that African line from nothing. We made our own maps and erected air-cooled stations in the heart of the jungle. We had a performance record of keeping ninety planes out of a hundred in the air all the time. The army will never do anything like that. Pan-Am was the best airline in Africa; it was a beautiful outfit, and it meant a lot to me and all the other fellows. I didn't have the heart to stick around and watch the army run it into the ground. Remember what happened when the army tried to fly the mails?"

That was the way most of the Pan-Am pilots talked, but I had never heard the army version, and I couldn't judge the argument. We took off the next day for Puerto Rico, then Bermuda, and finally LaGuardia field, New York. It was raining as I approached the customs, and I held my bags for a few minutes and looked at the lights of the city. It had been a long time. An officer with a soft Irish brogue came to examine my bags.

"How long you been away?" he asked.

"Seven years."

"Good God! Married?"

"Yes. My wife was with me up until a year ago."

He chalked both my bags "passed" and said,

"Go on and call her up. She'll be wondering where you've been."

This was the "tough" city of New York, but what a welcome it could give! I called my wife's home: her mother answered the telephone.

"Is Petie there?" I asked.

"Jim!" she cried incredulously.

"Yes. I'm home—"

"Wait, here comes Petie."

"Darling!"

My travels were over: I had reached my home port.

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